THE

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SONG FOR OCTOBER.

Like dew from the wing of a lark upspringing
Falls away from my soul its pain and care;
And my heart throbs wild with a glad pulsation,
In the glow and thrill of the sunlit air!

The Heavens are blue, and the earth is glowing;
There's a gleam and blush on leaf and vine;
And the very birds in their joyous flying,
Sparkle and glint in the golden shine.

The vine leaves sway to the dancing zephyrs,
And the autumn roses scent the air;
No chill and no gloom and no clouds above me,
Oh, life is sweet and the world is fair!

KITTIE.

JESSIE DALE,

The Conductor's Daughter;

on,

The Plot Against the Pennsylvania Railroad.

BY BURR THORNBURY, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF "ST. LEGER'S LOVE," "RAVENSWOOD," "SKALE, THE SCOUT," "AGNES AYRE," ETC.

CONDUCTOR DALE FINDS HIS DAUGHTER AND SISTER DRUGGED.

CHAPTER VII.

A WOLF IN THE FOLD.

Beatrice Rowland remained closely in the refuge she had found with the Dales; never going out; grateful and contented, but with the fear still haunting her that she might yet be tracked by her enemies to the spot.

She made herself very useful in the little family, so that she could not have been regarded as eating the bread of charity by any one, though those with whom she was would never dream of asking compensation for the inconsiderable additional expense her presence entailed.

But she had her own thoughts on the subject; and with the natural aversion a refined and sensitive nature has for dependence upon others—even though support be given in the guise of the most delicate and generous hospitality—she sought to make indirect return of the bounty of which she was the recipient.

She instructed Jessie in music—the latter possessing a fine instrument, and still needing a teacher's aid; she assisted her in her drawing; and even induced her to undertake a course of French—for in these and other accomplishments Mrs. Rowland excelled.

So ceaselessly did she employ herself in ways that added to the enjoyment of the little household, and so closely did she wind herself about their hearts, that they felt already that separation would cost them a pang. If she were to go, something bright would be taken from their lives.

But the prospect was that of their and her desire she was not soon to go.

Mr. Dale had held many conversations with her relative to her previous life, but little more was adduced than she had at first related.

He had brought himself, though with a strange reluctance, to speak to her of the singular agreement of her statement regarding her lost sister with his own experience. Mrs. Rowland was startled to learn of this, and her conclusion was, that possibly she had been again deceived by her false father, when he had represented that the little child known as Jessie was her sister; and that the waif of the rail was indeed Mr. Dale's own daughter, thus happily restored to him.

"The proofs—the absolute proofs—of our identities," she had said, "are in the possession of Belmont Mathewson; but I could not obtain them, or I surely would have done so."

"Would to God you had," sighed Stowell Dale; "then there would have been no room for doubt, perhaps. It is a sad thing to look upon one like my Jessie, Mrs. Rowland; to feel that she is my child; to believe it; and yet not *know* it absolutely. I could not love her less—I could not love her *more* under any circumstances; and yet only to know—to know!"

"She has, in part, your features, Mr. Dale," Mrs. Rowland had said.

"And in part, her dead mother's," he had added; "and at the same time *she resembles you.*"

It was true. Though very unlike in individuality, when the faces of the two were closely scanned and compared, an unmistakable resemblance was apparent. Surely here was mystery.

"What if it should some day be proven, Mrs. Rowland, that you and my darling *are* sisters, and daughters of a proud, strange family? I would then know that my own and only child is a waif and wanderer somewhere in the great world, while at the same time I would lose her who is—"

He paused, in pain.

"Your daughter—and who will ever be. Have no fear of that kind, dear Mr. Dale; it is *I* who will lose my dream of a sister; not you who will lose your precious Jessie."

And thus they had left the matter.

Mrs. Rowland's revelations respecting the magnificent plot laid by wealth and villainy to introduce vampires into the midst of an opulent corporation, that its richness might thereby be sucked from it to sustain rascally voluptuaries, were brought by Mr. Dale to the notice of Ellis Lester.

That gentleman had not "laughed the tale to scorn;" on the contrary, he took the alarm, for he already knew that corruption was breeding danger. But all was so indefinite and vague, that no hold of the peril could be taken.

It was like feeling for a foe in the darkness—like attempting to smother the pestilence, which was present but invisible.

Several days elapsed.

The advertisement for a servant, brought several applicants—but as the Dales were particular in their requirements in that respect, none had yet been accepted.

At last Jessie hurried to her aunt with the tidings that there was one in the dining-room, who, she was sure, would suit.

"Such a nice, companionable-looking person, aunty," said Jessie.

"Well, I hope her appearance doesn't belie her character—for I am getting tired of Jennie, and I don't want a poorer one in her place."

Aunt Mary descended to the dining-room, where interviews with applicants were held'

She found there a very pleasant-looking young woman indeed.

"Did you come in answer to the advertisement?" she inquired, rather surprised at beholding one who it might be supposed would not seek such a position.

"Yes, ma'am," said the young woman, modestly.

"Your name, please?"

"Annabel Smith, ma'am."

"Have you ever engaged in housework before?"

"Not at service, ma'am. I—I—"

The young woman appeared to be somewhat affected.

"I understand," said Aunt Mary, kindly, "You have but lately been necessitated to take this step?"

"That is it, ma'am. There are four sisters of us, and we couldn't all stay at home; and I dread the factory or anything like that, or even a sewing-room or a store. Housework suits me best—I like the quiet."

"Have you references, Annabel?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am," producing them. "My mother used to be in the best families, and some of them still keep sight of her."

"These are very satisfactory," said Aunt Mary, returning the papers after briefly examining them. "I think you will suit, and that you will find something like a home with us—we endeavor to make our servants feel that they are our fellow-creatures as well."

"Thank you, ma'am," returned Annabel, with effusion. "Most of folks are not that way, I take it, though my mother never complained."

"A good servant sometimes makes a good mistress, Annabel. You agree to come then?—the wages will be three dollars a week, with the usual privileges."

"That is satisfactory, ma'am, and if you please I will go home and have my trunk sent here at once."

"You can come immediately if you please."

"I will then. Good-morning, ma'am."

So Cecil Parnell, as Annabel Smith, was admitted under the roof that sheltered her whom he sought with evil object. He maintained his assumed character without arousing the first suspicion of the fraud.

All were pleased with "the new girl"—Mr. Dale, his sister, Jessie and Mrs. Rowland. There was no instinctive dislike, no vague repulsion felt toward this wolf in sheep's clothing, such as is often inspired by the mere presence of an impostor. Perhaps this was because the plotter was always the same—quiet, affable and obedient. Not once was he caught with a sly, triumphant or vindictive look on his face—not once did his cunning purpose show.

For several days—for a whole week he had been in the household, and yet no attempt had been made to execute the plan of abduction that his confederate had conceived. The wolf was in the fold, yet a very gentle wolf he seemed, frightening not in the least the household lambs.

Why had the fatal spring been delayed?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REASON WHY—THE DEED IS DONE.

There was a reason—a powerful, unexpected reason why the disguised Cecil had failed to act as had been planned.

He who had cunningly come to open the doors of Stowell Dale's house to villainous men, found himself circumvented in a way of which he had thought too lightly.

He fell in love with Jessie—sweet, piquant, artless Jessie Dale. She took his heart by storm, unknowing that she did it.

From the moment he beheld her he had been under the spell of her simple beauty. Instead of performing his treacherous part at once and flying from her enchanting presence, he made excuses for his delay to his confederates, and lingered day after day near Jessie. He found he loved her; and he found that another—the son, too, of a wealthy man—had discovered how sweet and pure she was, and was seeking to win her young affections.

Had Harry Lester known what a jealous foe he possessed in the person of the pretended Annabel Smith, he certainly would not have said so many flattering things of the agreeable domestic.

"Who is she, Jessie?" he had inquired. (Somehow he could not hold to addressing her as Miss Dale—she was Jessie to every one.)

Jessie told him all she knew, adding that she liked Annabel very much.

"Annabel," listening keenly in the hall, heard this.

"She likes me as a servant," he said to himself, delightedly. "She would soon love me as a suitor. Oh, Jessie, Jessie Dale! what now do I care for plots and counterplots? Give me your sweet companionship—your loving heart—your little hand—and Marbury and his villanies may go. What am I but a tool in his employ—he himself the tool of others! I have wandered to a garden of sweets; what do I care for a room of splendor? No, no, fair Jessie, I would not leave you and lose you for all the gold the city-vaults contain. Beatrice Rowland, you are safe. I'm sick of plots; I'm sick of sin-bought pleasures, young as I am to give them up. A simple life with the thee, sweet Jessie Dale, would suit me best henceforth. But can I win thee? This young lord Lester knows thy pure worth too; but will his proud parents favor such a choice made by their son? No; I will manage to nip this friendship that is already warming into love, and then *my* way will open."

Thus did Cecil—the young, mysterious Cecil—muse, and in most serious mood. How long it might last could not be told, but for the time it changed his life and being.

The first thing he sought to do was to prevent Harry Lester from becoming his rival, or if he had already become such, from continuing to be.

With that object he addressed the following note to the young man's parents:

"Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Lester—Your son Henry having become acquainted, under romantic circumstances, with the daughter of a man greatly your social inferior—his position in life being that of a railway conductor—it occurred to the writer of this that you might choose to forbid the further intimacy—which threatens to end in love—of your son with one whom you might not desire for a daughter. This communication will be sent anonymously; but if you are interested, you can make inquiries and investigations which will sustain the statements it contains. I give the names and address of the family thus referred to."

Which he did, and then, almost certain that results favorable to his object would follow, he forwarded the missive.

Then he studied as to how he might best reveal his sex, and under circumstances which would tend to favor his advances as a suitor for Jessie's hand.

"Ah! I have it," he said gleefully to himself at last. "*I will save her father's life;* gratitude will warm her heart toward me. I thought I was done with plots—but this is of a different order. Hold! a new idea occurs to me. Why not let her enemies have this Mrs. Rowland? That will be doing fair by my friends. Why did I not think of it before, instead of dreaming of letting her remain undisturbed? I will inform my accomplices that she *has now recovered*—ha! ha! recovered from an illness she never experienced—and that all is ready to proceed. Then 'Annabel Smith' will disappear forever, and Cecil Parnell, or the same person wearing some other name, will find his way once more to this attractive household stage. I do not think I would be recognized as the family's former servant—the treacherous Annabel!"

So the wolf again thought of its victim.

It was evening.

Stowell Dale's little family—himself excepted—were seated at their pleasant tea-table.

"Don't you think the tea tastes strangely, aunty?" asked Jessie, sipping daintily from her spoon, and curving her sweet lips in slight disgust.

"I am inclined to agree with you, my dear," answered her aunt, "and I thought I detected a peculiar odor arising from it. Annabel made it; perhaps she is not skilled in that department—so few people know how to make good tea."

"Annabel," listening from the kitchen, heard these remarks, and made some of her own in the same connection, though not audibly.

"Drink away, my Jessie," the cunning actor said; "and you, old lady—I beg your pardon, I should be more respectful; you are sweet Jessie's aunt. The tea won't hurt you. That's it; take another sup, just to make sure that it *is* queer-tasted. I am sure of you already, though; you've all taken enough to quiet you. Ha! ha! was there ever such a tea-party before! Tea and tattle go together, it is said; but there won't be much more talking done on this occasion. I hope no bothersome callers will interrupt my operations. I have little fear of that, however; I have chosen an hour when, as I have found, no one is likely to disturb me. Mr. Dale won't be home until ten, and by that time I won't care if he does come."

"Annabel."

The call was made in rather a drowsy tone of voice.

"Ma'am?" said Annabel, presenting himself with alacrity.

"Please take the—bring a—how strange—what?"

Aunt Mary looked altogether ludicrous, sitting there in her chair as if she were near napping instead of supping, and endeavoring to give her orders and express her opinion of the tea at the same time.

The plotter surveyed the scene with the intensest satisfaction. Mrs. Rowland was leaning forward in her chair in a stupor that bound her senses utterly. Jessie's little head was thrown back, her eyes were closed, and her tempting lips silently invited kisses. Aunt Mary also dropped off into this strange and sudden slumber, leaving the tea untasted further, but holding a silver spoon in her unconscious fingers.

Cecil Parnell laughed a low, pleased laugh of triumph.

"I will make sure of *one* thing," he said.

And thereupon he tripped to Jessie's side and took from her unprotected lips kiss after kiss—an act of theft as petty as it was indefensible.

"The first but not the last," he murmured. "You shall give me more some day, and take all these stolen ones back. But now for action! I wonder if the carriage is at the door?"

He glided from the dining-room to the entry, and opening the front door, peered anxiously out.

A close-covered vehicle stood silent at the door.

"Yes, there it is," he whispered to himself.

He made a peculiar gesture, which was immediately understood by a watcher's eyes. The door of the carriage was noiselessly opened, and a dark form alighted and stood on the pavement.

No word was spoken—there was need of none.

Cecil returned quickly to the dining-room. There still sat the three insensible figures. He approached Mrs. Rowland, lifted her gently and with ease from her chair, and bore her in his arms to the front of the entry. Then he glanced out, and received a signal that assured him the way was clear.

In an instant—so short the time seemed—the unconscious lady was conveyed to the carriage; then both men entered, Cecil first returning to close the door of the house; the order to move was given the driver, and this bold deed of abduction was done.

Over the stony street rolled the carriage, passing out Green to Eighth, but turning there to avoid the lighted front of the Ninth street depot, and then continuing by a round-about way until it seemed that miles had been traversed, though the point at which it halted was not distant from the scene of Cecil's successful villainy.

CHAPTER IX.

AN ASTONISHED MAN AND MAIDEN.

At ten o'clock Conductor Dale reached his home. He inserted his night-key, turned the lock, and entered the hall, but without meeting a welcome from any one.

"Where is Jessie to-night, I wonder?" he said to himself. The house seemed strangely silent, though the gas had not been turned down as an indication that the family had retired.

Mr. Dale, after taking off his hat and overcoat, looked into the parlor. All was still there, with not even the gas burning.

"I'll go into the dining-room," he muttered.

As he opened the door of that apartment, who shall tell of the surprise the spectacle there presented caused him. The tea-table standing uncleared, and his sister and daughter *asleep* beside it!

"Well, well! what does this mean? Mary, Jessie, what has come over you?"

As they did not arouse in response to his half-amazed, half-amused ejaculations, his sensations became wholly of the former character.

A sudden suspicion entered his mind.

"Where is Mrs. Rowland?" he cried. "Ha!—has villainy been practiced here? She is gone! She is stolen from us!"

He attempted to awaken the sleepers, but in vain.

"They have been drugged!" he now exclaimed with the force of conviction. "Annabel!"

As yet he had not thought of "Annabel" as an agent in the work.

Of course that deceitful creature did not respond.

Mr. Dale, now greatly alarmed as to the condition of his sister and Jessie, felt that a physician must be called to their aid.

"I must leave them here alone," he reflected with an anxious glance at the face of each, "while I run to Dr. Brown's. Poor Mrs. Rowland! what can be done for her? If these villains have her in their power again, I fear they will hold her so closely that search for her will be vain."

Thus he thought as he hastened to the physician's.

Dr. Brown after being informed, somewhat disconnectedly it is true for a man usually so clear-headed and self-possessed as Mr. Dale, of what had happened, hurried with him to the scene.

Immediately upon examination of the two unconscious sleepers, he pronounced them drugged with a powerful narcotic, the presence of which in the tea he soon detected.

"The agent employed to produce this effect is not hurtful," said Dr. Brown. "The drug has done its work, and we can only wait until its influence passes off. Now, Mr. Dale, what is your explanation of this matter?"

Mr. Dale rapidly gave his opinion of the nature of the outrage, stating briefly the facts of Mrs. Rowland's coming to his house, her residence there, her persecution, etc.

"You are sure that *she* was not an impostor?" inquired the physician; "and that the robbery of your house was not her object?"

"I am perfectly satisfied of her worth and honesty," returned Mr. Dale. "She is the victim of a cruel conspiracy. I am constrained to believe that our servant, who has been with us but a short time, was the agent of others, and administered this drug. All is plain to me now."

"Perhaps they were colleagues," suggested Dr. Brown.

"Do you mean our servant and Mrs. Rowland?"

"I do."

"Impossible, doctor. I tell you this Mrs. Rowland is one of the purest and best, though most unfortunate women living."

"I advise you to go up-stairs and look at your bureau-drawers—your desk—or whatever there may be containing—or lately containing—valuables."

"No, no, doctor; your ideas are running in too low a channel. There is more in this matter than you will believe. My anxiety now is to know what can be done in behalf of this wronged lady."

Dr. Brown was still incredulous.

"Let us make an examination up-stairs," he said, "and if nothing is there found wrong, I will be less inclined to believe your late guest is a female sharper."

Mr. Dale glanced at the sleepers, who still lay in deep insensibility, Jessie apparently very comfortable in a large chair, and her aunt on a sofa which stood on one side of the room, and to which Aunt Mary had gently been removed.

The doctor smiled.

"They are doing well enough," he said, "though they will experience some very unpleasant sensations when this stupor leaves them. We can leave them here while we make the examination I have suggested."

The two men then proceeded to the upper apartments of the house, where no evidence of theft was to be seen.

Dr. Brown began to think that the facts were as Mr. Dale had declared.

"The proper authorities should be informed of what has occurred," he then said, "that the parties guilty of this outrage may, if possible, be detected."

"Of course, and immediately," returned Mr. Dale; "yet I fear that search will be in vain. These are no common villains, doctor. They are rascals who aspire to be millionaires—they are playing for a lofty stake. I will just step into Mr. Burnell's, next door, and ask him to apprise some police officer of this affair, so that no time may be lost in attempting to aid Mrs. Rowland. I feel, doctor, as if one of my own blood had been thus torn from under my roof."

Mr. Dale spoke as he descended the stairway. Reaching the entry, he stepped out to obtain the services of his friend and neighbor, Mr. Burnell. That gentleman had not yet retired, and after hearing a brief account of what had happened, departed at once to bring an officer to the scene of the outrage.

In a comparatively short time he returned with two members of the police force, who after obtaining a knowledge of the circumstances attending the occurrence, agreed that detectives should be employed to work out the case, as little publicity meanwhile being given to it as possible.

Jessie and her aunt were removed to their chambers, that deep, unnatural slumber still wrapping their senses.

Mr. Dale became fearful that it would prove fatal, but the doctor reassured him.

"Do not be in the least alarmed, Mr. Dale. The drug is a powerful one, but harmless except as relates to the object with which it was employed. It is not a common narcotic, but one with which I

am fortunately well acquainted. The peculiarity of it is that its effects are so immediate. The circumstance of such a rare agent being used, is to me now an evidence that the parties engaged in this villainous work are, as you declare, no ordinary rogues—such would not have known of the existence of this narcotine."

It was not until past midnight that Jessie and her aunt gave any sign of arousing from their condition of stupor. Then they did, and were gradually brought back to consciousness. As Dr. Brown had predicted, very curious and uncomfortable sensations succeeded the passive influence of the drug they had swallowed. But an antidote, which could now be safely administered, soothed these manifestations. Jessie was soon in a condition to question and be questioned.

Her first words were:

"Aunty, something *does* ail the tea."

She appeared determined to take up her consciousness at the point where she had left it off.

"Oh, dear," she then sighed, "and something ails *me*."

Both her father and the doctor smiled, though the former particularly felt in anything but a smiling humor, unless it was solely to see his daughter reviving.

"Jessie," he said.

"Is it morning, father? or what is it?" asked she. "I feel as if I had had forty dreams at once."

"Get awake, my dear, and then I will talk with you."

"Why, I *am* awake," returned Jessie, a little resentfully. "But, oh! what a queer sleep I have had! I must have taken some of aunty's medicine that she is always offering."

"You have taken some of somebody else's, Jessie," returned her father, with a humorous gravity she could not understand. She was in a pretty fair condition of consciousness now, and for the first time noticed the presence of Dr. Brown. He was one of Jessie's favorites, and so she said:

"Why, dear Dr. Brown! I'm glad to see you; but I am not sick, am I?"

He smiled benevolently for answer.

"What *does* it mean, father?" she asked, in pretty perplexity. "Here is aunty, too, sleeping as if she didn't know you were here."

"Jessie," said her father, thinking she might now be able to recall what had taken place previous to experiencing the effect of the drugged tea, "do you remember what occurred this evening—or last evening, now—"he said, *sotto voce*, "at the supper table?"

"Why, yes—no," she answered, with a bewildered look. "We thought the tea was bad, and we sipped it to make sure of it; and—and—"

"That was all," added Mr. Dale.

"Shall I inform her of what has occurred?" he next asked, in an aside, of Dr. Brown.

"You might as well; she will sleep no more to-night."

"What *has* happened, father?" again inquired Jessie. "What makes you look so mysterious?"

"I will tell you, my child. There has been wickedness done in this house to-night. Poor Mrs. Rowland's enemies have stolen her away from us."

"Oh, father!"

"It was done by a cunning plot, Jessie. Our servant was false and treacherous. She drugged you all at the table, then opened the doors to the wicked men who have taken Mrs. Rowland from us."

"Oh, father!" cried Jessie, tearfully, though hardly comprehending what she had heard.

It was repeated to her, and then she understood it all.

"How cruel! how cunning! Can anything be done for our dear friend, father? Oh, it is terrible for those bad men to have her in their power."

"We have informed the police authorities, Jessie—we can do no more."

"And Annabel was only a spy and traitor, after all?"

"Nothing more."

"We had better kept Jennie, father."

Aunt Mary now appeared to be regaining possession of her senses also. Accordingly attention was given her, and the same scene, with variations, that we have described, was enacted as related to her.

Had it not been for the distress and sorrow the loss of Mrs. Rowland caused her, Jessie could have enjoyed her aunt's comical perplexity upon awakening, but, as it was, her tender little heart could do nothing but grieve.

Dr. Brown soon took his departure, promising to call early in the morning to see his patients again.

Mr. Burnell then went to his own house, after some further discussion of the serio-comic affair, and, as a result, increased interest in the fate of the abducted lady.

"And now," said Jessie when the three were alone, "I suppose we may as well clear the tea-table—we have no servant now."

Jessie did not seek to be humorous, for her eyes were tearful and her voice quivered with emotion as she spoke, but her aunt seemed to think that this allusion to the event of the evening was made in words too light.

"Child, child," she cried, rebukingly, "how can you jest at this time? Think of poor Mrs. Rowland."

"I am thinking of her all the while, aunty, and I feel just as miserable as I can. Do you believe we shall ever find her, father?"

Mr. Dale could not return a very cheering reply to this, but declared he would offer a large reward as an inducement for the detectives to make the most thorough search for the stolen one.

"Money will restore her to us if anything will, dear Jessie, but alas! those who have done this wrong can command thousands of dollars where I can offer but a comparatively little sum.

"Perhaps she can escape from them as she did before?" said Jessie, hopefully.

Her father shook his head dubiously. Then he said:

"It may be that I can interest Mr. Lester—Harry's father, Jessie—(Jessie blushed—the mention of Harry's name had come to have that effect upon her already) in the matter, and then I shall feel more sanguine of success. The great corporation of which he is one of the controlling heads owes her much, and Mr. Lester may act in behalf of our stranger friend."

"Oh, I hope he will, father."

"And now good-night, my child. I will retire for a few hours of rest, for I am tired, and must rise early. You will not be afraid to remain alone, since you choose to busy yourselves here?" He addressed the question to both, neither being disposed to seek her bed.

"Oh, no," said Jessie, "the danger is over now. It will seem lonely and *midnightish* for us to be up; that is all. Don't lose your rest for us, father dear."

He kissed the sweet lips, unknowing what others that night had pressed them, and little dreaming that his child was now to be plotted against, even as Beatrice Rowland had been.

CHAPTER X.

A MILLIONAIRE WHO WAS NOT ALSO A FOOL.

We introduce the reader to a spacious and elegant house, in the aristocratic quarter of Spruce street.

It is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lester, and also of their son Harry, who, however, spent much of his time in New York, where he acted as his father's agent in certain business transactions.

Ellis Lester and his wife were alone in their elegant private sitting-room—an apartment, which, despite the luxuriousness of its appointments, possessed a cheery, home-like look, often absent where more show is regarded.

He was a man of majestic physical build; his features were regular and handsome, their expression that of intellectual power and shrewdness tempered with benevolence; his hair was finely grizzled; his abundant beard almost of snowy-whiteness, though his age was not over fifty-five; and altogether he looked the far-seeing, deep-thinking man of business, the gentleman, the father and humanitarian. Even the latter, notwithstanding his life had been chiefly passed in the turmoil of the street and counting-room—in great speculative enterprises and pioneer undertakings in works of corporative improvements. But he had been honest, and he had been successful—two things that tend to make a man satisfied with himself and the world. Ellis Lester had not grown harsh and rapacious as he prospered in material ways, but kept his heart human and tender.

His wife was one worthy of him—not the fine and refined lady merely, but the woman also. She was one of the few who know how to put a correct valuation upon worldly possessions—neither undervaluing them nor overvaluing them.

She shared in common with her husband the pleasures and responsibilities of a vast fortune, enjoying it liberally and rationally, and never forgetting that a pleasure that will not please others than self, is a poor pleasure indeed.

A follower of fashion—as we all in a measure are—she liked home far better than she did society, and neglected no duty there that the world of show and gayety might be better served. She was a woman of fine presence, with a matron grace sweetly blending with a high-bred air; one whom upon first meeting you might think possessed too much hauteur, but whose beauty of character and sweetness of disposition soon showed through her natural dignity and pride.

"My dear," said Mr. Lester, as he drew a velvet-cushioned easy chair up to the drop-light under the chandelier, "I have a very interesting note to read to you—or show you, as you please, since it is addressed to us conjointly."

"Read it, please," responded Mrs. Lester.

Whereupon, with a quiet, contemplative smile, Ellis Lester read aloud the note addressed to him and his wife by the scheming, love-stricken Cecil Parnell.

"What do you think of that?" he inquired as he finished, and looked toward her with a very unconcerned face.

"Let me see the handwriting," requested Mrs. Lester, without much evidence of displeasure. "How beautiful it is!" she exclaimed, as she beheld the note. And Cecil Parnell's chirography was certainly of an order to merit the praise. "Who could have sent that?" she next wondered. "So our Harry, if this warning is to be believed, is to make a *mesalliance*, is he? I do not think we need disturb ourselves greatly about the matter until we have better evidence than this of the fact. Harry has always trusted us, and I think he will continue so to do.

"You do not attach much importance to anonymous communications, I see—a very good rule," remarked her husband. "But I am constrained to believe that there is some truth in this."

"What, my dear, do you—"

"No, no," interrupted Mr. Lester, with a smile, "I do *not*. Let me tell you all that I have reason to think is probable in connection with this matter. You remember that Harry was relating an incident that occurred a few evenings since, at a depot in this city."

"Very distinctly."

"Well, the young lady he met on that occasion is the person referred to in this note, and a very interesting young creature she is."

"You know her then?"

"I know her father, and I know him to be a most worthy and gentlemanly person."

"Stowell Dale," said Mrs. Lester, reading the name on the note.

"Yes, my dear; he is a conductor on the New York Division of our road."

"And he lives in Green street, and has an agreeable daughter, on whom Harry has called since their accidental meeting and acquaintance. Now I think Harry might have told us *that*."

"Well, he did; I heard him remark only last night that he was going to Mr. Dale's."

"I did not hear him, my dear."

"Yes, you heard him, but you did not particularly heed him; your attention was directed to something else at that moment, and so Harry got off without questioning. If you only had seen the pleased, expectant look he wore, no doubt in anticipation of the pleasure of his call, you would have thought, perhaps, as I did."

"That Harry is really interested in his new acquaintance?"

"Yes, my dear."

"How observing you are, I hope he hasn't fallen in love—to use an odious term—with a pretty face alone."

"Harry is not one of superficial tastes, I think."

"You appear, negatively, to favor his course?"

"I do positively, my dear. Harry is a sensible fellow, and if he is continuing his chance acquaintance with Miss Dale, we may rest assured that he has found something to attract him. We have heard him say a hundred times that he will never marry a fashionable woman, but that he is open to the charms of goodness, sweetness and simplicity, and I believe he means what he says."

"A fashionable woman may possess all these," remarked Mrs. Lester.

"Not the conventional, fashionable woman, and it was of that type he was speaking. He has a horror of being caught by some fair schemer. He says it is dreadful to be a millionaire's son—or regarded as such, and is a little or more of my opinion.

"What is that, my dear?"

"That there is no happiness like domestic happiness. And *I* know all about that."

Mr. Lester smiled most benignly on his wife.

"Thank you," she said. "There *is* no happiness like domestic happiness; and no unhappiness like domestic unhappiness. Harry is a peculiar youth, for one of his associations; and I am profoundly grateful that he is. He cares little for gay society, though he mingles in it so freely. His dream is of quiet, loving home-life, and he would be miserable were he to wed one whose tastes—especially as they might be allowed free exercise because of his large means—were for a wholly worldly life. There is danger to our son, too, for frivolity and superficiality are so common, and often so artful and deceiving."

"You have spoken my own thoughts, Lavinia," said her husband, very feelingly. "I trust our boy will be fortunate in his choice of a wife; and if she does come from outside of what is termed 'society'—if he does leave the gay gardens of the world and look for his heart-flower in a less crowded place, *we* will not say him nay, I think?"

"Heaven forbid that false ideas should ever so move us," she responded, fervently. "I have so much faith in Harry that I do not doubt he will choose wisely, and that his choice we will gladly make ours."

Cecil Parnell's shallow scheme to rid himself of a rival appeared to promise him only failure. Unfortunately for him, the world is not all made of the flimsy stuff he supposed it was.

"So we will give ourselves no present anxiety on that score," said Mr. Lester. "I am only curious to know who has so early and gratuitously given us this notice of Harry's movements."

He picked up the note again and examined it, smiling amusedly.

"I cannot determine," he continued, "whether the hand is masculine or feminine. It is certainly very striking and original."

"Never mind the note, my dear—destroy it; I should not like any one else to see it."

Mr. Lester tore the paper into very small pieces and then threw them into the grate.

"Tell me all you know of Stowell Dale. He is entirely respectable?" continued his wife.

"Oh, entirely so; and a man of much larger means than many suppose. I have always regarded him not only as a gentleman but as a *character*."

"What do you mean by that term?"

"Well, I hardly know what. He isn't just like other men; there seems to be something in him (not a part of his every-day life) that suggests—but ahem! I am quite nonplussed; I can't say what I wish to."

"It is because you do not know what you want to say," said Mrs. Lester, with a laugh. "Mr. Dale would doubtless be amused to hear you thus speak of him. Do you mean to give the idea that there is something mysterious about him?"

"Yes, partly; I think it strange he continues in his arduous position of railroad conductor, when, as I have more than once understood, there is no necessity for it."

"He might ask why *you*, my dear, still busy and burden yourself with the affairs of the financial and general business management of the road."

"There's where you have me," smiled Mr. Lester. "Especially since—" He paused, and a noticeable expression of seriousness took the place of the smile.

"Especially since what?" inquired his wife.

"I ought not to trouble you with the mention of the matter, I suppose, but I *will* inform you that I have been annoyed somewhat of late—perhaps I should use a stronger term, and say disturbed—by certain occurrences arising out of my connection with the road."

"What do you mean, my dear? you look quite serious."

"It may be that I ought to feel so. But I will explain. I have lately received several letters, threatening me with assassination, unless I supported certain measures of policy, which have recently been presented for our consideration, and which I regard as extremely hostile to the best interests of the company."

Mrs. Lester did not seem to be much disturbed at this announcement. She merely said—

"But you do not attach much importance to such cowardly communications? Do not men occupying positions which give them power to oppose or punish villainy frequently receive such letters? Only the other day, Judge P——'s wife was speaking to me of an epistle of that character, lately addressed to her husband. He had given several evil-doers sentences of which their friends outside of prison disapproved."

"You are as cool as a lawyer, Lavinia. What will you say when I tell you that attempts have actually been made against my life?"

Mrs. Lester started, now really alarmed, for the tone in which her husband had spoken convinced her that his question was a revelation.

"You shock me," she said in anxious concern. "Has such really been the case?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Lester, with grave countenance. "I would not speak lightly on such a subject. Only a few nights ago a train on which I was, came near being thrown from the track at a dangerous point of the road, and in accordance with an intimation I had received that the deed would be attempted."

"And you never told me until now!"

"No, my dear, I thought I would not distress you with the knowledge of the fact. But now I will not withhold anything from you. The belief that there are secret and powerful enemies working against myself and my business associates—not as individuals, but as representatives of an opulent corporation—has been signally confirmed by the very lady of whom Harry has spoken in connection with the Dales. She made some startling revelations to Mr. Dale, who in turn communicated them to me. In these days of gigantic frauds, peculations and wholesale villainies, when courts, corporations and legislatures are mastered and corrupted by the gold-power—when we *know* that millions have been grasped by illegal hands—it behooves even the most secure not to be over-confident of their position."

"Do you then suspect the existence of a conspiracy having for its object the wrongful enrichment of its members?" asked Mrs. Lester, deeply interested.

"I do," was her husband's answer. "There are men to-day rolling in luxury—obtained by unholy means—who are not satisfied with their present splendor, but are ambitious to outdo all they have yet accomplished. Princes of corruption are they, whose vileness is only hidden by their trappings of show. And yet such men are *honored* by a numerous class, and they obtain power and place and influence."

"And hesitate at no crime, by the commission of which they can attain their ends," added Mrs. Lester, with a shudder.

"At no crime whatever. Murder is nothing to them, so that their own white hands do not the deed. But the career of these scoundrels is usually not long—their fate may easily be predicted. Retribution sooner or later overtakes them. There *are* honest men in the land yet, and it is through them that the vampires perish. God helping me, *I* will continue to be an honest man, and live to thwart these secret workers of iniquity."

Mr. Lester spoke grandly. In his earnestness he had arisen and stood before his wife, looking like some representative of Justice, in whom was vested the power to exercise her sternest prerogatives.

She regarded him admiringly.

"I rejoice to hear you speak so," she said. "Would there were more like you, my dear husband. Long may you be spared to engage in this good work—you who are both a power and an example."

These two that evening had much more to say in connection with this momentous subject; but we need not further record their conversation. Enough has been given to show the sort of stuff of which both were made.

To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 14.)

HALLOWE'EN.

BY PHŒNIX.

"Daisy, we're all going nutting to-morrow evening, will you go?"

"What for?"

"Day after is Hallowe'en, you know, as one must have nuts, won't you go?"

"Well, I suppose I will; May, is Charlie Danvier going?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Oh, what a nice time we shall have—"

"Yes, if it doesn't rain; it always does you know."

But the "clerk of the weather" favored them with an exception this time, for the next day came round fair, and found a large party under the green wood ready for the nuts.

Daisy, a city *belle*, was quite the *rage* at that quiet village, and Charlie Danvier was not the only one who had grown to like her society. This day he sat beside her watching the soft white fingers that every now and then turned up some new treasure from the green moss, she seeming from her exclamations of delight a very child.

"See, Mr. Danvier, see this dear little thing might have been the drinking-cup of a fairy.

"Do you believe in fairies then?" he asked. "I suppose you do not; but above all, *do* you believe in the mysteries of Hallowe'en?"

"Well, candidly, I think I do."

"Near here where we are sitting," said he, sitting close and whispering mysteriously to her, "is a large oak-tree, standing quite alone in the wood in front of it is a large pool."

"Dear me, how you frighten me."

"This tree and pool are enchanted. That is to say, Hallowe'en being a *moonlight* night, you stand with your back to this tree, and your face being reflected in the water, you will see your lover looking over your shoulder; only you must go *alone*."

"I should die of fright."

"You have also the privilege of making a wish; but, this must be done as the clock strikes twelve. Miss Daisy, I *dare* you go to-morrow night."

"I'm not afraid."

"You would not dare to."

"We will see,"—with a light laugh that brought Ralph Newgate, who had been looking for her, to her side.

"Well, Mr. Newgate."

"May I have the pleasure of driving you home?"

"Thank you."

Charlie asked himself if it was possible that she loved *that man*. "That man" certainly loved her, there was no doubt about that in *his* mind, and he only wanted a fair opportunity of putting his fate to the test, so he told himself; but somehow he had always put it off, till finding Daisy and Charlie Danvier so near together, had determined him to stand this nonsense no longer.

"Miss Daisy," he asked, when they had reached the house and were seated in the parlor, "would you like to live always in Danbury?"

"Me live in Danbury? Why no," innocently—"I'm only here on a visit."

"Then you don't like it here?"

"Oh, yes, well enough, but to live here—"

"Not even if you loved some one?" She was blushing furiously now. "Daisy, my darling, do you love me well enough to marry me? It has been my one wish to make you my wife."

From the beginning of this outbreak Daisy had sat in perplexed silence, quiet and motionless, not even repulsing his advances.

"Answer me, Daisy, for Heaven's sake answer!" as she turned her white face to him.

"Mr. Newgate," said she, through lips trembling and white, "Heaven only knows how willingly I would have spared you this, and since you have spoken I must tell you that this can never be."

They both sat in silence, he looking out of the window to hide the mute agony of his face, and she longing to comfort him, yet not knowing how.

"Daisy," said he, "will you let me bid you good-bye here? I think I will go to New York to-morrow."

She turned to him, the soft, bright eyes filled with tears.

"Oh, Ralph, Ralph, I liked you so well that I would have given anything in the world to have spared you this."

"Will you let me kiss you good-bye? I know I am asking for what belongs to some other man, but don't make me leave you without a sign."

He took the kiss and she gave it, sorrowfully, and without the warmth and lingering that lovers kisses usually have, and then they parted, each heart sadder than when they first met.

Hallowe'en was to be a merry night in the little town of Danbury; all the men and girls were to meet at one of the houses, and after the usual celebrations were over, each was to have some particular thing decreed for him or her to do.

"And you, Daisy, what shall we give you? I think, as a stranger, it ought to be the enchanted oak."

"So be it," she replied, carelessly.

"Well, as it is a quarter to twelve I think you had better go."

With a reluctant step she went to the door, and turning a little met Charlie Danvier.

"Let me go too, Miss Daisy?"

"No, it would spoil the charm; you must stay."

She walked quickly on, a bright scarlet shawl thrown over her head. When she came to the edge of the wood she stopped, shivering, but remembering that there was no time to lose, she hurried on, and in a few minutes found herself at the oak. She stooped over the pool, gently stirring the water with her hand, waiting for the clock to strike twelve. Then, as the last stroke vibrated through the air, she leaned over and wished,—

That Ralph Newgate might be successful in all his desires, and that his life might be a happy and prosperous one. As she said these words, she fancied she heard a low groan in the trees behind her—but paying no attention, she leaned over again, watching for some sign on the surface of water. Then she thinks she sees a dark shade in the water; and now she is sure that a head is there; she screams—and turning quickly, finds herself face to face with Charlie Danvier!

"Oh, Mr. Danvier, how *could* you frighten me so; and besides, you spoiled the spell; and now I am going away to-morrow, and shall never have another chance to try."

She turns angrily from him, believing herself out-witted for the sake of entertaining a *village*; and angry with herself for having believed Charlie Danvier, she stands at his side in silence, trying to keep the tears of mortification from streaming down her cheeks.

"Won't you forgive me, Miss Daisy?" said he, with suppressed mirth in his eyes.

"No, never! I *hate* you."

"Then you did not *want* to see *my face* shining above yours in the water?" He sees that she is blushing furiously now. "You did want to—my own—my sweet!" and then somehow Charlie felt that his sins were forgiven him, and their betrothal was sealed under the oak. This time the reflection in the water showing plainly that his head is above hers.

"How dreadful it would have been," said he afterward, "if you had not married me; you would have had to answer for destroying every one's faith in our wonderful oak."

"I am glad if I was the means of making their faith more steadfast," said she.

CLAUDIA'S TRIUMPH.

BY CLEMENTINE MONTAGU,

AUTHOR OF "THE COST OF CONQUEST," ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.

DYING.

Think not that her vows are broken,
Challenge not her wifely fame,
Though her parted lips have spoken
Other than her husband's name.

—*Anon.*

Frank Vavasour did not die, though for many long, weary days he lay between life and death, tended by Austin Bertram, who expressed the utmost solicitude for his recovery, and watched over, when she could snatch a few hours from her duties at the theatre, by Claudia Wynne and her attendant, Dorothy.

The affair had been, of course, a subject of intense interest in the fashionable world for the usual nine days, and the news of it had flown everywhere.

Amongst others, Lady Nortonshall had read of it in Paris, where she was staying, and whirling through the giddy routine of balls, *matinées* and *conversaziones*, as though she had neither care nor thought beyond the dissipations of a leader of the fashions and her place as a queen of society.

To see the once modest, frank-hearted Alma now, any one would have thought her utterly heartless, and a perfect woman of the world. She bore her husband's neglect and absence as a thing of course, and heard of his renewed devotions to La Claudia with apparent indifference, going her way totally unmoved in outward appearance; but the news of Frank Vavasour's danger roused all her old love for him.

It came to her suddenly, as it had done to Claudia, in the midst of light, and the glitter of rustling robes and pealing music, and for a few brief moments her heart stood still and her brain reeled.

Mrs. Eversfield was at her elbow, and noticed her emotion.

"Have you no sense of pride—of common respect for yourself," she asked, with something very like a sneer, "that you let a crowd of strange people see how the news of a man's peril affects you, and that man not your husband? For shame, Alma!"

Lady Nortonshall reared her slight form proudly, and looked at her aunt with flashing eyes.

"Thank you," she said. "I was forgetting my dignity as 'my lady.' Yes, aunt, I have pride; it was only the shock, it was so terrible."

And in a few minutes she was flitting through the rooms, her laugh the lightest and her smile the gayest there, and those of the company who knew her remarked how "she had outlived her love for that young sailor she was once engaged to," and thought her a very lucky woman to have made so much better a match.

But after all was over, when she had arrived home, and was once more alone with her aunt, her reserve broke down, and she burst into passionate tears, and declared her intention of then and there proceeding at once to London.

"What for, in Heaven's name?" demanded Mrs. Eversfield, in amazement.

"To see him—Frank."

"Are you mad, Alma?"

"I don't know—perhaps I am; but I must see him once more. Think, if he should only die without forgiving me?"

"And what, pray, if he did?" demanded the elder lady, in a freezing tone. She had no mind to leave Paris just yet, and could not quite understand what she called "Alma's heroics." "What can this man be to you now that you are married? Really, Alma, I thought you had more delicacy. You must be out of your senses."

"I know—I feel it, aunt; sometimes I fancy I must be going mad. I know that Frank Vavasour is—can be—nothing to me now—never more upon this side of the grave; but I would fain tell him with my own lips that it was no perfidy of mine that caused his sorrow—that my hand did not deal the dreadful blow which has marred his whole life."

"How ridiculously romantic you are, Alma," said Mrs. Eversfield, with a great deal of asperity. "I hope for your own sake that you will not persist in such an absurd course of proceeding. Pray do not mention the subject again; if you do, I shall feel it my duty—yes, Alma, my solemn duty—to write to Lord Nortonshall about it. He left you in my charge, but, of course, I cannot control your actions now. However, if you insist on this very indelicate proceeding, I must beg him to come over and release me from my chaperonage. *I* will not be responsible for any mad freak you may choose to indulge in, believe me."

"My husband!" said Alma, bitterly; "what would he care whither I went, or for what object? I am nothing to him—worse than nothing, Heaven help me!—save for the quarterly payment my bankers make to him."

"I do not wish to exculpate him. His lordship's conduct is, to say the least of it, such as no one could approve," said her aunt, severely. "But, remember, Alma, he is your husband, and you have a position to keep up. It would ill become Lady Nortonshall to run after a man even though he is sick and an old playmate, and force her way to a bedside where she is neither expected nor welcome. Have you forgotten the actress, Alma? Does it not strike you that if you should go to see Mr. Vavasour, as you so madly propose, you would, in all probability, find her there before you—nurse, companion, and friend in all—nay, more, perhaps his wife by this time."

"I had forgotten her," Alma replied, in a low tone, full of intense pain. "Of course she will be there; he loves her now."

"As he has a perfect right to do, whilst you have none to love him. I am glad to see that something has brought you to your senses. You will think no more of such a mad expedition?"

"No; I could not bear to go and see her. But, aunt, I must have some news of him. Can we not write?"

"I shall write—as an old friend, of course, it is quite proper and correct that I should do so—to Mr. Bertram, and inquire how his friend is. This much I should do under any circumstances, and you must be content with whatever answer may come to us from that gentleman."

Content! It was an easy word to say, but there was no content in Alma's heart that night. Never in her young, free girlhood had she loved Frank Vavasour as she loved him now, when she was uncertain whether he was living or dead.

Dying, was the story she had heard, and the word seemed to ring in her ears and press into her brain.

Dying! and she could not see him to tell him that which, perhaps, might make his last hours happier—that she had ever been true to him in heart, and loved and mourned for him still.

It was hard to think that the eternal parting had come, and she could make no sign. She lay tossing upon her bed, unable to sleep, until the bright sunbeams forced their way into the apartment, and with them, like a lightning flash, came the thought of a way by which she could communicate with Frank.

This actress, this Mademoiselle Claudia—all the world said she was good and pure—and if she loved him with an unselfish love, would she not convey to him a note or message? She was a woman, and surely could feel for one.

As this thought struck her, Alma sprang out of bed, and hastily throwing on her soft, wadded dressing-gown, sat down at her writing-table, and began her task.

It was a difficult one, apparently, for sheet after sheet of daintily-tinted note-paper was torn into innumerable fragments before she could satisfy herself with what she wrote. At length her letter to Claudia was completed.

"Hotel d'Angleterre, à Paris,
"July 18th, 18—.

"MADEMOISELLE—I hardly know how to put on paper that which I want to express to you, or even how to approach the subject; but I will write to you as one woman in sore affliction may write to another who is in sorrow, and whose sorrow arises from the same source. I hear that Francis Vavasour loves you, and that you return his love, and are a good, true friend to him. May Heaven reward you for being so in its own good time! My brain whirls and my hand trembles, and I scarce know what I am writing; but I must unburden my aching heart. Frank once loved me. Do not be afraid—that love is past—but he did love me; and how that love was returned only One can tell. The bitter news of his death alone broke the tie between us—and after a time of such mourning as cannot be spoken of, I yielded to the wishes of my friends, and married. He came back on my wedding-day, to see me give my hand away, as it must have seemed to him, willingly, and to accuse me in his heart as faithless and perjured. I know that to this hour he fancies me a false, fickle creature, who could not remain true to her lover for two short years. He does not know all the causes that led to my seeming faithlessness—and now that he lies in such danger, I wish that he should. Last night, in the whirl of a crowded ball-room, I heard that he had been well-nigh murdered, and was dying. Dying! The word seemed to ring in my ears like the toll of a death-bell, and I almost fainted. I must reach him by a word before the veil which hides the threshold of the next world is raised for him to pass—and I can think of no hand but yours to help me. You will, will you not? I only ask you to give him the enclosed little note. Read it to him if you will. It does not contain a word that the whole world might not hear; but it will show him that Alma Bouverie was not the false, heartless creature he believed her when he saw her at the altar. If I may trust you to do this, mademoiselle, I shall expect a line from you to the above address; if not, well, *n'importe*. I shall know, by your silence, that you will not do this for me.

"I am, ever gratefully, yours,
"ALMA NORTONSHALL."

Lady Nortonshall pondered much over the note she wrote to send in this letter. It was but a few lines, yet it gave her far more trouble to write, than the longer one.

At length it was completed, however, and the whole sealed up. She was somewhat puzzled how to direct it, being uncertain what Claudia's second name might be.

"Mademoiselle Claudia," she soliloquized. "That will be sure to find her; it's the only name I have ever heard her called by."

So the missive went its way, duly addressed—

"*Mdlle. Claudia, Royal Elysium Theatre, London.*"

And Alma waited and waited, but no answer came, and no other sign that it had been received, either by the person to whom it was addressed or by any one else, and she hardened her heart against poor Claudia, and thought harder of her than ever.

The missive reached London in safety, and was delivered in due course at the stage-door of the Elysium, when the hall-keeper put it into the letter-rack.

Claudia did not play that night—and Mr. Golightly, coming down, spied the letter.

"Mademoiselle Claudia, eh?" he said, taking it down; "and foreign, too. I'll send it to her—as she won't be here before to-morrow evening. Where's Taylor?"

"In the scene dock, sir; but your own servant will be here in a moment."

"Oh, well, send him; he knows where she is."

"Yes, she'll not be hard to find," muttered the hall-keeper, while a shivering ballet-girl, waiting in the hall for some one to come down, opined that "it would be a long while before anybody sent *her* letters all over the town after her."

"When you draw the money that ma'amselle does," replied the man, grimly, "you may ride in a gold coach, and have letters all the way from the moon, if you can find any one to bring 'em. The guv'nor knows what she's worth to him, or he wouldn't do it. Here, Taylor," he shouted, "here's a letter for ma'amselle, to be delivered immediate."

"She shall have it in a jiffey," replied Taylor—a stunted but sharp-looking boy, who ran Mr. Golightly's errands, and made himself useful in various ways, "I'll be there in less than no time."

"And see that you're back in no time, too; there's those envelopes to direct, and—"

"Oh, bother!" replied the lad, breaking

ont into a shrill whistle, and waking the echoes with "Just before the battle, mother," as he ran off.

He was not an outrageous time away, getting back at least half an hour before anybody expected him.

"Well, did you see ma'amselle?" asked the hall-keeper.

"No."

"She was there, wasn't she?"

"Oh, yes, she was there. A gentleman took the letter from me, and said as how he'd give it her," he replied.

"A gentleman?"

"Yes—one as I've seen about here. I know him by sight."

It was Mr. Austin Bertram who had met Taylor at the door and taken the letter from him.

"For Mademoiselle Claudia, is it?" he said, as he closed the door on the lad. "And if I'm not mistaken, I've seen the handwriting, before."

He looked musingly at the letter again.

"What can *she*, of all women in the world, want to write Claudia about?"

CHAPTER XVII.

REBUFFED.

Love! Thy love!
If a flame, it is to warm, to comfort,
And to cheer; not to blast and scorch.
Away! Profane not the sacred name.
—*Mrs. Lovd.*

A very short time after his disaster, Frank Vavasour was able to sit up and converse, and the doctor pronounced him out of danger.

"Hum! ha! a very narrow escape—a very narrow escape indeed, my dear sir," he said. "A leetle more inclination of the weapon to the left, and we should hardly have pulled through it. In fact, as it is, I think we may be very thankful. However, all danger is past now, and we must only be careful to keep ourselves very quiet. No agitation, my dear sir—mind that—or I will not answer for the consequences."

Yes, it had indeed been a very narrow escape for Frank. The slightest turn of the knife, and the blow which had stretched him senseless on the floor would have proved fatal; but it was not so ordained, and whatever object was sought in his death was frustrated.

No clue could be found to the perpetrator of the outrage, and the victim himself could not give the slightest information. He had seen nothing in the short interval which elapsed between his hearing the sound of some one behind him and receiving the blow which struck him down; but he had lost something. The glove, and the papers that had been wrapped up with it before he went to sea, had disappeared, and no trace of them was to be found.

Frank was very silent on the subject—much more so than was his landlady, who was horrified at such a catastrophe occurring in her house, or Mr. Bertram, who searched, and inquired, and offered a reward, but all without any tangible result.

"Leave the matter alone, Bertram," said Frank to him. "I shall discover the miscreant one of these days, and then—"

"Well?"

"Why, then, I shall have a double account to settle with him, that's all."

"What can you mean?"

"Ah, I am talking in riddles to you, of course; you do not understand—how should you? Let it rest—let it rest!"

And Austin Bertram was fain to follow his friend's advice, though he expressed himself in indignant terms to such of their intimates as he spoke to on the subject, that such an occurrence could possibly take place in London without the police being able to find out the delinquent, and indulged in many a sneer at the incapability of our so-called detectives.

"In Paris, now," he remarked, "everybody in the house or connected with it would have been examined; but there's such a respect for what they're pleased to call the liberty of the subject in this infernal country, that while they're going in their roundabout fashion looking for a man, he walks away from under their very noses. Bah! I've no patience with them."

And he bit the end of his cheroot in a very vicious manner, and went off to expatiate on the iniquities of British law to the next acquaintance he met.

Claudia was very much surprised at the singular reticence which Frank Vavasour displayed upon the subject, and took him to task about it the first time he was able to visit her.

She occupied a pleasant little villa at Bayswater, and drove backward and forward to her engagements in a well-appointed brougham, which was the envy of her less fortunate sisterhood.

To this suburban retreat she conveyed her friend as soon as the doctors proclaimed him well enough to venture on a drive, and he was much invigorated by the fresh air and still warm sunshine of the late autumn, while the trees had on their lovely changing tints, and beautiful flowers remained to toll of the past summer.

Claudia's dwelling was a perfect little paradise of neatness and good taste. Dorothy kept her two or three servants in good order, and superintended the household, and the favored few whom the actress admitted to her bower always went away charmed with the house, and more than ever charmed with its mistress.

Frank felt his spirits revive as soon as he crossed the threshold, but he was too terribly depressed to rouse into his ordinary self at once.

"You are sadly *triste, mon ami*," Claudia said, after watching him for a while. "Is it that this dreadful outrage has injured you more than you will let me know, or is there any fresh cause?"

"No, Claudia, nothing fresh."

"Then, what makes you so sad?"

"A feeling that everything is going against me—that, strive as I will, I cannot fight against fate. Ah, you do not know what I lost on that night."

"I do."

"You do?"

"Yes; I know that you lost a man's glove and some papers. I know that; but I do not know their history, nor what made them so precious. Have you no confidence in me that you withhold the story?"

"Nay; any one may know it. The glove was the sole clue to the murderer of one who was more than a father—a friend I would have died for. It was found on the place where he fell. The papers were all the memoranda I possess relating to the mysterious affair. I cannot hope to make you understand what their loss is to me."

"I can quite understand. But is there any one who has a motive for stealing them?"

"Yes, one."

"Who? Ah! I need scarcely ask. You mean—"

"The man to whom the glove belongs." She looked curiously at him.

"And you have never discovered who it is?"

"Never."

"But—" and she hesitated.

"But—what, most sapient counsellor?" he said, with a kind smile, taking her hand.

"You have a suspicion?"

"I can hardly say that. I had a suspicion, the strangest and most unfounded, I verily believe, that ever entered the head of mortal man; and yet *I* could not shake it off."

"Whom did you suspect? But what a foolish question for me to ask, who would be no wiser if you told me."

"You are mistaken, then, Claudia."

"What do you mean?"

"The man whom I suspected is well-known to you. But the idea is preposterous, though several circumstances fostered my belief at the time. He was staying in the house, and several things made me fancy it was his hand that committed the deed."

"Is it a secret?"

"Not from you. I believe, despite the libels on your sex, that you can be silent; and if ever you feel any inclination to reveal it, remember that I have no grounds for my suspicion. The man whom I imagined had murdered my poor friend was Austin Bertram."

"Bertram!"

"Even so. I cannot account for it any more than I could rid myself of the fancy. Was I mad?"

"No."

The tone of her voice was strange and grave, and he looked at her with astonishment.

"What makes you speak like that?" he asked.

"The feeling I have toward him myself."

"How?"

"When I look at him his face brings back to my mind the remembrance of every dreadful thing that happened to me when I was a child; and before my mother died I had seen suffering enough for a lifetime."

"Poor Claudia!" he murmured, caressingly.

"I connect him most strangely," she continued, "with things which happened in that time of privation and misery—with one dreadful outrage in particular; and yet he has neither the face nor style of my poor mother's persecutor, and there is not the slightest resemblance in their names; but at the same time I feel a sort of nameless dread creep over me whenever I meet him. It seems as though he would influence my life in some way, as the bad man I speak of influenced my mother's."

"Instinctive antipathies are strange things," remarked Frank, after a pause; "but I believe in them. I have precisely the same feeling which you speak of toward Austin Bertram, in spite of his great kindness to me."

"He is not a good man," I am sure," said Claudia, musingly, "though he has never given me any cause for saying so. The resemblance may be a chance one after all."

"Who do you fancy he is like?"

"Ah, I hardly know. I will tell you the whole story some day, all about my early struggles with my mother. I've sung in the streets for a dinner, and danced for my supper in the tap-room of a wayside public house; but it wouldn't do to put that at the top of the bills, so they have invented the pretty little history, which I have no doubt my admirers believe most implicitly: and it was in those days of want and hardship that I met the man I spoke of."

"But you did not tell me his name."

"How inquisitive you are. But I will tell you. His name was—"

A servant appeared at the door at this moment, and said, respectfully—

"Lord Nortonshall is below, mademoiselle. Shall I show him up?"

"Certainly."

She waited until the girl had closed the door, and then turning to Frank, with a smile that was half sad—

"You had better go," she said, quietly. "I know you will not care to meet him. I don't either; but then I cannot afford to be impolite."

She opened a side-door as she spoke, and let him pass through. He went at her bidding, sadly enough, for though he did not love her as she would have had him do, he could not bear the idea that an unprincipled man like Lord Nortonshall should be a constant visitor at her house.

Frank Vavasour knew that Claudia was purity and innocence itself; but he knew also that slanderous tongues were busy with her name, coupling it with the peer's in no measured terms.

He walked away from the house quietly, for he knew the visitor would make a long stay, and as he went, strangely enough, his thoughts ran on a little carved casket which he had seen standing on a side-table in Claudia's room. He had seen it often before, and it had never excited his curiosity; but now it haunted him strangely.

It was only a carved toy, a pretty useless nothing, such as ladies love to encumber their tables with; but he could not get it out of his head.

"I'll look at it when I go back," he thought. "I suppose I have seen something like it before, and that is why it comes uppermost to-day."

Meanwhile, Lord Nortonshall was sitting with the actress, wearying her beyond expression with his prayers and protestations. She was powerless to end the interview—he would not go.

"You are wasting your love on yonder fickle boy," he said, at length, having picked up a book which was lying on the table, and had Frank Vavasour's name inscribed in it.

"You have no right to say such things to me."

"Bah! it's true, and what return will you get for your affections?" he said, sneeringly. "When he is recovered enough to go back to the dissipation in which I hear he lives, he'll fall in love with the first pretty face he sees, as he has with yours."

"You are very polite and complimentary, my lord; but you jump too hastily to conclusions. I have never said I loved the gentleman in question."

"No, perhaps not in words; but your every action testifies it. Oh, Claudia, it makes me mad with jealousy. I want your love for myself."

"You will never have it, my lord. My gratitude for your kindness, my respect you may have; but your wife should stand between your love and me."

"My wife—pshaw! don't speak of her. You don't know her."

"I know she is a woman, my lord, and your wife, and her claims and reputation must not be trifled with. You would make of me your toy, your plaything. That is plain speaking, is it not? but it is the truth, and you would boast among your boon companions of your triumph. It would be a glorious conquest, would it not?—a strong man over a weak woman; but it happens every day."

"You are hard, Claudia! You do not consider how I love you."

"Love! Do not profane the word, my lord; it is too holy to be linked with sin. Were there no other reason, the memory of my mother, and the hope of one day meeting another person would keep me from wrong-doing."

"Another lover, I presume, you mean."

"No, you are wrong. It is—or rather was—a little child."

"A child?"

"Yes; shall I tell you the story?"

"Tell me anything—talk to me how you will; everything you do or say only makes me love you the more, Claudia. I would give all earth and Heaven, were they mine, to hear you say you returned that love."

"Too great a price to pay for it, my lord; but I will tell you when I saw the child. I shall meet her again—I know I shall. I was with my mother—we were vagabonds then, singing at street corners for our daily bread, getting a lodging where we could. We were pursued by a villain—it is too long a story to tell for what reason—and he sought to take her life one night when we were far from any human habitation. My mother was struck to the ground, in another moment I should have been alone in the world, when suddenly a carriage came in sight. I shrieked, it stopped, a gentleman jumped out, and the would-be assassin of my mother fled. She was saved, and we were taken away from the spot. In the carriage was a little girl of about my own age—a gleaming, fairy-like thing, all satin and lace—coming home from a party. She put her soft arms round my neck, kissed my dark face, and comforted me. I was a little outcast, a beggar's brat, and used to hear myself called by every opprobrious epithet; but this little, holy angel caressed me like a sister. I never saw her after that night; but the time is as fresh in my memory as though it were only yesterday. I do not know her name—I do not think I ever heard it—but I shall know and meet her again, I am sure."

"What makes you think so?"

"I left a token with her: my mother took a crucifix and chain from my neck, and placed it around hers. She bade her keep it always, for it had been blessed by his Holiness at Rome, and the blue-eyed little darling vowed she would keep it always."

"What is it like?"

"It is of bronze, carved, with the figure of the Madonna and a lily wreath. It opens, and displays a piece of the true cross and my mother's name."

"And what was that?"

"Maddalina Wynne."

"I have surely heard that name before; but where?"

"I cannot tell. None knew it but those concerned, and I have not told it to any one."

Lord Nortonshall left Bayswater, pondering over the story which Claudia had told him, and wondering where he had heard it; but he could not come to any satisfactory conclusion on the matter. One thing was certain: that he loved Claudia more than ever, and was determined to carry his point by fair means or foul.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SECRET OF THE CASKET.

Lord Nortonshall made no secret of his passion for the fair Claudia, and talked openly amongst his associates of her, and the manner in which he had been repulsed, calling her a little hypocrite and a prude, and all the other epithets which a disappointed man will use.

His lordship was one of those who had not good sense or feeling of honor sufficient to know and feel that there are many true women who tread the stage in velvet and tinsels, or that honest wives and tender mothers are to be found among the hundreds who nightly administer to the people's amusement.

But there were some amongst his friends who had sense enough to see La Claudia's real worth and modesty, and who expostulated with him; but he only laughed at them for their pains, and vowed his determination to follow up his scheme.

"Pshaw! 'She is a woman, therefore to be wooed; she is a woman, therefore to be won,'" was his reply to his friend, Lord Wedderburn, when one evening that gentleman had broached the subject. "Some fellow says that in a play, I think, my dear Wedderburn, and a very wise man he was, too, for there's not a woman on the face of the earth that a man cannot win in some way if he chooses."

"You have a very poor opinion of the sex, Nortonshall; but I fancy you will find yourself mistaken in this instance."

"Nonsense, man! She may be a miracle of innocence; but she's a woman, and, as such, has a vulnerable point. I mean to find it out."

"And your wife?"

"Oh, let her sulk in Paris. I'm not going to be the laughing-stock of all London over her romantic love for that young sailor; and, after all, she's a fool for her pains. He's dangling after La Claudia, too. By Jove, it would be worth trying, if only to win her from him. Not that I've ever met him there; it's my belief that she smuggles him out of the house whenever I make my appearance; but I shall meet him some day, and when I do, let him look to himself, that's all."

Mr. Austin Bertram heard of all this, partly from Lord Nortonshall himself, and partly from other quarters, and he was not slow to carry it to Frank.

He was kinder than ever to the young man, making himself almost a necessity to his daily life by the thousand and one little ways in which friendship can be shown. Frank made but little remark when he heard his friend's intelligence, only saying that he needed no new proof of Claudia's goodness or Lord Nortonshall's perfidy, and the subject dropped for the time, though Mr. Bertram could very plainly see that he was more affected by the tale than he chose to have appear.

"But it's not for the sake of La Claudia," he muttered to himself. "It's the other one—the fair-haired beauty, my lady, over yonder, that he cares about. He thinks that it will make her suffer—pray Heaven it may!" he continued, with a savage oath. "My lord and lady, my gay young spark and the famous actress, I owe you all something, and as I'm a living man, I'll pay my debts with interest before long."

It was for Alma's sake that Frank Vavasour grieved when her neglectful husband, forgetting his allegiance to her, thus openly pursued the actress. Do what he would, think of her as he might, he loved her still; but there was a bitter feeling mingled with his love—the certainty that she had forgotten him.

"Better so," he sighed. "Why should I wish her to be unhappy? And if she still thought of me as in the old time, she must be so. But— Oh, Alma, Alma! She must have known that I was stricken near to death, and yet she could be silent."

But he wronged her there. He knew nothing of the letter she had sent. Her passionate appeal to him for one word, to tell her how he was, had never reached him. It was safe in other keeping, ready to be used as a terrible engine against him in the time to come.

He thought how he could avert the evil, and endeavored to devise a way to let her know of her husband's courses without making mischief; but no means presented themselves. He could not write to her—that would be dangerous; and how to let her know was more than he could contrive.

A sudden thought struck him—he would ask Claudia's advice; and he started for Bayswater on the spur of the moment. Ere he reached the villa, however, he had reconsidered. He might mix her up in his troubles by so doing, and that would be both wicked and cruel. She had enough trouble already on her head, without burdening her with his.

It was, consequently, as an ordinary visitor that he knocked at the door, and was most warmly welcomed by Claudia, who, in her neat home dress, sprang to meet him with a beaming face.

"Oh, Frank," she exclaimed, in a joyful tone, "I am so glad you have come. I was so frightened about you."

"Frightened!"

"Yes. You'll think me very foolish, but I dreamed—"

"Dreamed! 'Oh, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you,'" he laughed.

"Don't laugh at me, Frank. Indeed it was a fearful dream, though most confusing and bewildering. I dreamed that you were in danger—danger to your life, Frank—and that I was in peril, too, and another person, too, a woman, and it came to us all through—whom do you think?"

"I cannot guess."

"Your friend, Mr. Bertram."

"Through him! Why, what possible harm can he do to us?"

"Oh, I don't know. I only feel that something will happen, and his will be the hand to inflict it, I am sure."

"My dear Claudia, you are nervous this morning; let us talk about something else—this, for instance." And as he spoke, he touched the little casket which lay upon the table, "I have often felt curious to know what it contains, but it is always so securely fastened."

"And you are curious?"

"I am."

"Like all men. Curiosity is a failing laid specially to our sex, but it belongs quite as fairly to yours. Suppose I keep that casket merely for its outward beauty? Many ladies keep such things upon their tables."

"Then why lock it?"

"Must you have a reason for everything? Have you ever tried to open it, that you are so persistent about its being locked?"

"Yes, often."

"You impertinent man. You deserve that it should have turned out a miniature infernal machine, full of little guns to shoot you as soon as it opened. That's a fine reward for curiosity. If any of my other friends are tormented with the same curiosity, I must look up my pretty casket for fear of mishap. It is pretty, is it not?"

"Very—it would be a pity to remove it from its place—it is quite an ornament; and if it is locked, and you keep the key, there cannot be much danger."

"But it is *not* locked, most sapient judge; it has neither lock nor key. I see that you will not be satisfied until its mysteries are explained, so hand it to me, and I will exhibit its wonderful properties without delay."

Frank handed it over to her, turning it round as he did so, and regarding it attentively.

"It is truly Venetian in style, is it not?" said Claudia, as she took it from him.

"It is."

"And truly Venetian in its contents, as you will see by and by. Now to open it. I am puzzled sometimes myself. Oh, here it is. You press pretty hard upon this engraved lion, and mark the result. It is a perfect 'Open sesame.'"

She pressed her thumb upon the carving as she spoke, and the casket flew wide open. So cunningly was the carving on the outside contrived, that flowers and animals and all sorts of devices seemed to disentangle themselves from each other and fly apart, where none would have supposed an opening.

The space inside was small and velvet-lined, and there, side by side, lay two small vials, gleaming in contrast to the dark bed on which they lay.

"Are they so very valuable?" he asked, touching one of them, in surprise.

"Beyond all price, I believe. I was made to understand so, at any rate."

"And what are they? Some rare perfume, I suppose."

"No."

"Some delicate cosmetic, then—some preserver of feminine beauty?"

"Wrong again."

"Then I'll give up guessing. I never was good at it, and I see no probability of finding out."

"One is poison."

"Poison!"

"Even so; the most deadly that can be conceived. I told you it was a true Venetian gift."

"A dangerous one. What induced any one to give you such a thing?"

"I really don't know. It was most gallantly given me by an old nobleman, a former friend of my mother's. The casket, I believe, was an old heirloom of the family, and the contents of the bottles were prepared some time in the last century. 'Take this, my child,' he said to me at parting. 'It is an old man's only gift; it will keep you from sin, save you from sorrow, and revenge you for insult. A single drop of the one phial will suffice. The other is a sleeping draught, potent, but harmless; it will throw you into a torpor resembling death, but doing no harm. You may find both useful in the strange land of eternal clouds to which you are going; and if your path is all over roses, and you have no need to use an old man's gift, the casket will keep me in remembrance.' Ah," she continued, "I should not have needed anything to make me remember him, poor old Signor Francesco Morena; but I took it from him in the same spirit in which it was offered."

"But the poison—are you not afraid of some accident happening through it? Would it not be better to get rid of it? We are not in Venice now. And you can keep the casket still."

"No; I will keep the old man's gift intact. I shall have no need in my quiet life for anything so murderous as poison, and as for the sleeping draught I should consider that quite as dangerous as the other. You need have no fear of my trying either."

She closed the casket, and set it in its place, and said no more upon the subject; but Frank could not put it out of his head. All the rest of the day his thoughts ran riot on the subject of the powerful poison in Claudia's possession, and the possibility of an accident happening with it.

Certainly, no one knew of its existence; but for all that he could not help wishing that she would throw it away.

On that very day, however, another person discovered the secret of the casket. Lord Nortonshall, sauntering up to Bayswater, presented himself at the door of the villa.

"My mistress is out, my lord," said the servant who opened it.

"Will she be long?"

"I can't say, my lord; she left no message."

"Ah, well! I'll go in and wait for her. She'll not be long, I dare say."

Shown into the room where he was usually received, his lordship began to fidget about the room, as men will do when they have nothing to do, and presently, in the course of his wanderings about the room, he came upon the casket.

"Wonder what it is," he said to himself, turning it round and round. "I don't believe it's solid—and yet I've never seen it open. It's a pretty bit of antique carving enough. Hallo! What's this?"

In turning and twisting it about between his hands, he had pressed upon the spring which raised the lid, and the little bottles lay revealed.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, as he drew them out, and discovered an inscription which lay underneath.

It was written in Italian, a language which he was a master of, and set forth the properties of each bottle, with the name of the celebrated chymist who compounded them.

No. 1, the left-hand bottle, was the poison; No. 2, which lay on the right, the sleep-ing-draught.

"A pretty plaything for a lady, upon my word!" he exclaimed, holding the bottles up to the light to see what colors they were. *La belle* Claudia has brought Italian customs here with a vengeance. Poison in a lady's room! Is my dainty beauty a second Lucretia Borgia, that she arms herself in this fashion?"

The mixtures were very nearly the same color—a dark brown—and were hermetically sealed. While he held them in his hand he heard steps outside, and Claudia's voice sounded in the hall.

Lord Nortonshall hastily replaced the vials, and closed the casket just as the actress entered the room; but in his hurry he had unwittingly made a great mistake, and changed their places.

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 8.)

"IF."

If, sitting with this little worn-out shoe
And scarlet stocking lying on my knee,
I knew the little feet had pattered through
The pearl-set gates that lie 'twixt Heaven and me,
I could be reconciled, and happy, too,
And look with glad eye toward the jasper sea.

If in the morning, when the song of birds
Reminds us of the music far more sweet,
I listened for his pretty broken words
And for the music of his dimpled feet,
I could be almost happy, though I heard
No answer, and saw but his vacant seat.

I could be glad if, when the day is done,
And all its cares and heartaches laid away,
I could look westward to the hidden sun,
And with a heart full of deep yearnings say:
"To-night I'm nearer to my little one
By just the travel of a single day."

If I could know those little feet were shod
In sandals wrought of light in better lands,
And that the footprints of a tender God
Ran side by side with his in golden sands,
I could bow cheerfully and kiss the rod
Since Benny was in wiser, better hands.

If he were dead I would not sit to-day
And stain with tears the wee sock on my knee,
I would not kiss the tiny shoe and say:
"Bring back again my little boy to me!"
I would be patient, knowing 'tis God's way,
And that He'd lead me to him o'er death's sea.

But oh! to know the feet once pure and white
The haunts of vice have boldly ventured in!
The hands that should have bat'led for the right
Have been dyed crimson in the paths of sin!
And should he knock at Heaven's door to-night,
I fear my boy could hardly enter in!

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

☞ "The Smashed" is the name of a proposed club in London, the members to consist only of those who have been maimed on a railway or run over on the streets.

☞ Somebody has made the discovery that the engineers of the Reading railroad are in the habit of keeping pet fish in the water tanks of their locomotives.

☞ A California young lady, telling a gentleman about her Yosemite trip, said the scenery was gorgeous, but she didn't like their style of locomotion. "How's that? how did you locomote?" "Why, I had to ride *a la* clothes-pin."

☞ A young man at Princeton College believes in having "a place for everything and everything in its place." He nails his slippers on the wall, four feet up, and then all he has to do of an evening is to wheel up his easy-chair in front of them.

☞ A singular case of monomania has been brought to light in Troy. The victim confesses to a mania for spoiling ladies' dresses, having ruined a large number on the street by the aid of licorice juice.

☞ A boy found a pocketbook, and restored it to its owner, who gave him a five-cent piece. The boy looked at the coin an instant, and then, handing it reluctantly back, audibly sighed, as he said, "I can't change it."

☞ A man in New Orleans is the proud possessor of an educated and accomplished monkey, which washes its hands and face with soap and water, brushes its hair, and, after dinner, picks its teeth with a regularly-organized toothpick.

☞ According to the London Medical Record, Mr. T. Bolas finds that a perceptible amount of the intoxicating fluid may be obtained from so small a quantity as two ounces of ordinary bread. From the report of his investigations, published in the Chemical News, it appears that six samples of new bread, bought at shops in London, yielded from .221 to .401 of one per cent. of alcohol.

☞ A somewhat strange coincidence occurred in a St. Louis court the other day. The prisoner at the bar, the lawyer who was addressing the court in defence, the reporter who was taking notes of the trial, and one of the spectators, were all classmates in the same institution of learning about seven years ago.

☞ A Polish lady of rank, twenty-seven years of age, and "a perfect Juno in beauty," was recently sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, in Berlin, for indulging in certain acts of theft. While the prosecution was in progress she inherited a fortune of 200,000 rubles, and her advocate now moved the court for her release, in consideration of a heavy bail. The court, however, refused to accede to the request.

☞ A young man was discharged from Auburn prison recently who had earned $400 by overwork during his four and a half years of confinement. He was a skilful workman engaged in a tool-shop. This augurs well for his future. Out of prison he would doubtless have earned five times as much.

☞ At Tuttletown, Cal., recently, a young man named Johnny Gillen shot and killed an old man named Harvey Oulton during a dispute about the postmark on an envelope which they picked up in the road. There is nothing like maintaining one's opinion!

☞ A henpecked gentleman determined to sup with a party of friends against the will of his wife. He was resolved that he would, and she that he should not go. He did not go. His friends missed him, and, just for a lark, invaded his residence, where they found him and his wife sitting in their chairs fast asleep. He had given her an opiate that he might slip away, and she had given him one that he might not.

☞ In Moyamensing Prison, says the Philadelphia *Press*, are two men, one of whom has not seen the light of the sun for twenty-three years, and the other for ten years, and over both during all this time have hung sentences of death. When these men were convicted there were circumstances surrounding their cases that mitigated their crimes and restrained the governors of the period from signing their death-warrants. The Press thinks they have suffered enough, and calls for their pardon.

☞ The marriage has just taken place at Avignon of a man named Van Haddegham, who was recently condemned at Toulouse to two years' detention for belonging to the International, who was allowed to leave the prison temporarily for the purpose. After the ceremony, which was followed by a repast, the couple were about to separate, when the governor consented to prolong for three hours the few moments of liberty accorded to the man. The time was employed in a walk on the banks of the Rhone, after which Van Haddegham returned to his captivity for the next eighteen months.

☞ There is a twelve-year-old boy in Farmington, Me., who for five or six weeks last year did all the housework for his helpless mother, and three children all under three years of age. The Chronicle says he made butter, pies, biscuit, etc., and didn't shirk from the task of preparing meals for a party of threshers at work in the barn. Willie Radcliffe is his name, and he has made it a name to be proud of.

☞ A gentleman who recently advertised in the London Times seems to have carried forgiveness to a point rarely attained. "After you had eloped for the third time," says he, "I distinctly told you that I should not be at the trouble of running after you again." It seems hard on the advertiser that he should be expected to spend his whole life in running after somebody who keeps on eloping without intermission, after having been distinctly warned that a persistence in the objectionable practice would at last be visited by the terrible retaliation of no pursuit.

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LETTERS FROM ZIG.

THE FOURTH CINCINNATI EXPOSITION.

It does really not seem possible that there have been four Cincinnati Expositions to write about, dear POST. Not until I come to count 'em on my fingers, and to remember 'em by token that I had a new black silk dress to wear to the first one, that I had that dreadful ague and couldn't go to the second one at all, and that during the whole time of the third one, my hospitable mansion was so inundated with a freshet of relations, that for four blessed weeks I was at my wit's end how to eat 'em and sleep 'em, and blamed Providence severely that He hadn't let me be born a Christian statesman or a successful opera singer, instead of a miserable newspaper correspondent.

That's how I remember the first three Expositions. I remember this last fourth one which closed two nights ago—let me see—I remember this Exposition by the fact that while visiting it I was most egregiously bamboozled by a man. I bought a lovely bottle of supposed honey. The said man assured me on his honor that it was real honey, and that he "wouldn't tell no falsehood." He looked like an honest man. He had a real nice mustache. So he took me in. I bought a bottle of his real honey, brought it home and tried it on a hot biscuit, and it was about as much honey as—a newspaper editor's temper. I paid forty cents a pound for sugar with a lot of water stirred into it. When a man with a real nice mustache assures you that he "wouldn't tell you no falsehood," beware of that man.

The worst objection to this Exposition is that a body can't find anything new to say about it. It was very big and beyond praise, and that sort of thing, and contained every device of man, from that first invention of human skill, the original fig-leaf apron of Adam, Esq., (by the way, which invented the fig-leaf apron, Adam or Eve?)—down to a machine for making crinkled stove-pipes. But all those things had been there before, and newspaper people had nabbed them all up and written about them over and over again. The Exposition was very much the same as last year. Anybody can bear to look at a machine for crinkling stove-pipes two or three years right along, and admire it every time, but when it comes to the fourth year, it begins to be a little bit monotonous. Ditto a ravishingly beautiful white and gilt hearse for the accommodation of dead children who want to be buried in style. Ditto a stuffed owl. The powers that have the Exposition for 1874 in charge should bestir their bones and find something new for us to gaze at—or else the reporters will starve. And when you in Philadelphia arrange for the Grand Centennial Exposition of '76, do take warning by our example, and scour the universe for something new.

The Natural History department of our Exposition was really new and well worth examining. Entering from one of the Floral Hall doors, the first thing you saw was a cage with three baby-alligators in it, each about a foot long and as ugly as a heathen stone god. They have the queerest way of shutting their eyes. First they have a sort of membrane which they shoot over the eye from end to end, from front to back. Then they have a sort of lid which they heave up over the eye from the bottom to the top, and so shut their ugly peepers, instead of lowering the lid from above downward, like a Christian. If you ever see an alligator, watch him wink.

At the other side of the entrance, nearly opposite the baby alligators, just above your head, hung a big hornet's nest. Our Exposition had a smattering of the scientific, too, for around in the corner was a young man exhibiting the wonderful and beautiful spectroscope, while a blackboard on the wall near by, explained in beautifully written characters the subject of spectrum analysis to the great crowd. In one of the glass cases was a Kentucky beech chip, cut by D. Boone, Esq. A little farther on, in an upright glass case, was the skeleton of a female gorilla, looking very much as though she might have been a man and a brother once. Still farther on was a case full of the skulls of every nation, kindred and tongue, among them the head-piece of a Sandwich Islander, with the loveliest teeth you ever saw in your life, handsome enough to put a blush on the most artistic set of "store teeth" ever manufactured. I don't believe I'd mind being a heathen, if I could just shut my mouth over such teeth as sprouted out of that barbarian skull. I noticed too that the monkey skulls had all their teeth too, every one. So there's one advantage in being a monkey, anyhow.

Speaking of monkeys reminds me to mention a very curious belt, once worn by a South American chief, and exhibited in this last Cincinnati Exposition. It is made of monkey's bones and teeth and birds' skulls, and fringed with those brilliant and beautiful Brazilian beetles which we have read so much about at one time and another. I had no idea how brilliant and exquisitely tinted a beetle could be, till I saw that South American savage's belt.

And then the crowd surges up and shoves us on, past the stupid dried plants, past the everlasting tiresome splotches of stuffed birds, past the rare and large collection of old coins which I don't care a cent for, because it's more than I can do to get my ten fingers upon the coins of these days. The coins of the present day are far more intensely interesting to me than the coins of a thousand years ago. I should think so! Here are some tremendous shells from the Indian ocean, big enough for a giant baby's cradle, and just the other side is a cage with two wicked rattlesnakes, and a card tacked to it bearing the legend: "Hands off!" Just as if anybody now would want to put his hands *on* the deadly creatures! Two little dried-up old individuals pause before the rattlesnake cage, and gaze thereon with eyes sticking out in an expression of admiration not unmingled with awe, watching the wide-open eyes and slowly moving heads of the fearful reptiles. Finally one little old man gives the glass cage a timid poke with his skinny fore-finger, like the Ancient Mariner's, and remarks to the other little old man:

"Alive, I reckon?"

I rather "reckon" they are, little old man!

On again towards a case of tiny shells and nondescript curiosities, before which a crowd of people are gathered. In this case is a shallow box of specimens marked: "Pearls from the Little Miami River." This shallow box particularly claims the admiration of a very tall, gaunt female woman in a red dress, a mashed-in black bonnet, and a brilliant, striped woollen shawl pinned up around her neck tight enough to choke her. In one muscular brown fist she held a big flat lemon cracker, while the forefinger of the other muscular brown fist pointed to the shallow box. She took a tremendous bite out of the big flat lemon cracker, and then with her mouth crammed and her teeth full of cracker crumbs, she jogged the elbow of her companion and spoke as follows:

"Them there specimens comes from the Little Myamy River."

Then she took another tremendous bite out of the big, flat lemon cracker—and a second time, with her teeth full of cracker crumbs, she jogged the elbow of her companion and remarked, solemnly:

"Them there specimens comes from the Little Myamy River."

And as we passed on and lost her in the crowd, we saw her take a third tremendous bite, which finally finished the big flat cracker, and heard this singular female, with her teeth yet full of cracker crumbs, observe for the third time:

"Them there specimens comes from the Little Myamy River."

I don't know whether she is standing there saying it yet or not. Probably she owned the Little Miami River.

There is not room to mention a hundredth part of the curious and interesting things in this Natural History department. It was beyond all doubt the most entertaining feature of the Exposition. We pass all through it from end to end, making a little note here and there at wide intervals. Finally, at the farther end, we come to a certain specimen which, while we don't know whether it comes from the "Little Myamy River" or not, is a very remarkable specimen of grim wit. High in mid air over our heads is fixed a huge stuffed alligator. Seated astride this alligator is a ghastly human skeleton, taking a wild witch's ride. I can't tell you the effect of it. It is what one might call ridiculously horrible. I don't know who is responsible for this piece of diabolical, witch-like fun. But it certainly is an idea. Everybody will agree with me there. The skeleton riding the alligator topped off the Natural History room. After that it said "Sweet Cider, 5 cts." "Sweet Cider, 5 cts.," is the last specimen in the Natural History department.

It was very excellent and entertaining, as I told you. But there is one thing I beg to be permitted to remark. Since the time when I was a schoolmistress and corrected boys' compositions, my two eyes have never beheld such ungodly spelling as was displayed on the tables attached to the articles in that Natural History department. There were some curious mosses on exhibition, from the north part of Canada West, somewhere,—mosses such as the reindeer subsists on. The label attached informed an admiring public that the mosses were "*Raindear* Food." Dear! Dear! How is that for spelling in the Queen City of the West? In another place they spelled beads—*beeds*. Yet again some brilliant genius labeled a stuffed bird, a golden *pheasant*. And even in the Art Catalogue of the Exposition the word earthen is printed *earthern*. I'd like to inquire what dictionary our art committee got the word earthern out of.

And so on all through nearly, the spelling of the labels was a scandal on the State of Ohio. When the officers for the Exposition of '74 are elected, I'd advise 'em to devote a good part of the year to their spelling-books. Because such spelling, as I've noted above, is—it's just awful.

My beloved young friends,—if it costs you your life:—Learn to spell!

ZIG.

LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

DEAR POST—With many apologies for past derelictions of duty, and an humble half-promise to do better in future, I hesitatingly sit down to Post you on New York fashions. But where to commence! Aye, there's the rub.

It is long, very long since the subject was broached between us, and so many and varied are the changes which have taken place, that to give you any idea of the modern woman as she appears in October, 1873, one needs must commence at the graceful wave of the willowy feather that floats from the apex of the towering hat, toying coquettishly with the wanton wind (seems to me I've heard that somewhere before), and work gradually downward through all the many gradations of toilet to the very tips of the cunning little French kid boots. It looks like a Herculean task, and *is*, but like Tennyson, we believe in letting "the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of *change*."

In the little item of

HATS AND BONNETS,

great dissatisfaction has been felt for the last two years, and many and mutinous have been the whispers, and significant the clenching of tiny fists as fair femininity has surveyed herself in the plate-glass mirror, and vainly endeavored to coax herself into the opinion that she did not look a positive fright. The nearest approach to satisfaction was the half-angry admission, "Very stylish," and in that one expression was summed up every merit possessed by the poor unfortunate bonnet; and even that one consoling reflection was due to the homage paid to Madame Fashion. Anything, no matter how absurd, is *stylish*, if the ruling deity but attaches his signature, and Fashion, like Charity and a waterproof cloak, covereth a multitude of sins.

But this season the bonnets are prettier, and in some instances make a somewhat near approach to becomingness. A compromise between the hat and bonnet has somehow been effected, and the result is highly satisfactory. But there are no old people either in France or in fashion, and as usual, elderly ladies are unprovided for.

The two ruling bonnets are known among fashionables as the "Dauphine" and "Derectoise." Both have high Oxford crowns; but the trim of the "Dauphine" stands up like a coronet all around to the ears, while that of the "Derectoise" is set up over the forehead and droops at the sides.

Lyons velvet is the material for the bonnet proper, but such worlds of trimming are this season admissible that when once finished it would be hard for the casual observer to say whether velvet, felt or straw formed the base of operations. Feathers were never more fashionable, and never before displayed in one-tenth part the numerous tints now seen—a dozen being sometimes used upon one bonnet, yet so delicately and harmoniously blended as to in nowise shock the most refined and cultivated taste. After feathers come torsades of twisted silk and branches of fruit, grapes, berries, and all nestled in natural leaves of brown and crimson, while here and there is seen a buckle of jet or mother of pearl. In colors, sage, green olive, brown, mulberry and dark-blue find greatest favor, combined with trimming in the lightest, brightest and most opposite shades.

In hats we have what is known as the "Wellington," a pretty stylish little creation, and seemingly adapted to all styles of beauty, and marvellously becoming to ugly faces as well. It has a high crown slightly pointed with a medium-width brim turned up at each side in a very coquettish style. The front is ornamented with a pompon or ostrich tips and bows of ribbon while from the top floats backward over the shoulders a long, waving, willow feather, either black, or a grayish white. On the side is thrust a steel dagger of immense proportions—not a hat of any kind durst show its head this season without some weapon of defence; every knot conceals a treacherous looking poignard; every loop shelters a glittering arrow, and lurking in silken ambush an oxydized disk flashes its steely fire through showers of feathery spray. After the "Wellington" we have a number of other less popular *chapeaux*, the "*Marie Antoinette*" the "*Coronet*" the "*Cecile*," and the "Brigand" being foremost, and all with a spray of autumn flowers fastened beneath the brim exactly behind the left ear.

CLOAKS AND JACKETS

do not show any very new designs as yet, though it is still rather early to give up all hope for the season. The "Dolman," with its "angel" sleeves, which by the way do somewhat affect the celestial in a high wind, besides nearly freezing the unfortunate wearer, are on exhibition and bid fair to be the fashionable wrap, though *why* or *wherefore* is not stated. Certain it is that not within the "memory of the oldest inhabitant" have we had anything quite so atrociously ugly and ungraceful. And yet there are feminine enthusiasts who clasp their lily hands and exclaim, "Isn't it *too* lovely?" but should the conundrum, "In what does its loveliness consist?" arise, a world of "guessing" would necessarily have to be indulged in before a satisfactory answer could be arrived at.

The velvet polonaise, close-fitting and looped in the back and elaborately trimmed with thread lace, *passementerie*, cable cord, buttons and bows, is also out, and alongside we see the tiny little sailor jackets of navy blue, corded with white, and the larger sacques half-fitted in the back, with loose straight fronts. Seal-skin sacques, ranging in price from $50 to $120, are upon the counters, but are in less demand than formerly.

SUITS AND DRESSES

are imported in immense quantities, but as if only the medium woman was of any account, every garment is of the same dimensions. Manufacturers forget that every lady who would like to purchase a ready-made suit isn't up to Canova's standard of female beauty—five feet, two inches—and that a few *overdo* the business, and reach an altitude likely to throw a sculptor into spasms, and that there are other jolly souls who have nothing to do but laugh and grow fat, and would think themselves going into a decline were they to discover their avordupois less than 180 in the shade, and that all these would like to get fits, if possible. As garments are made, however, they stand a great deal better chance of being struck by lightning than they do of finding a ready-made suit that will come within a mile of answering their purpose. Still, there is one advantage in it, the suits are all on exhibition, and the new styles can be copied by one's own special dressmaker, and hence we have nothing more to say.

Hoops and bustles and voluminous puffing have all "gone out." To be fashionable, one must be long and straight and slender, and all of a bigness, from head to foot. It's hard on the chubby beauties, but "rotation in office" is the fair thing, and it is high time the thin ones had a show. Long clinging skirts, very scant and plain in front, the fulness all drawn back, long waists, high ruffs of black silk, lined with pink, scarlet, blue, whatever color one fancies, sleeves close at the wrist and fitting the arm as nearly as may be, is what the winter of 1873-4 is bringing to us. Neckties, too, have been discarded, and in their place one sees a bow of ribbon an inch and a half in width, with ends a yard long. They look tasteful and pretty, and so do a thousand and one other things I intend to tell you all about in my next.

Till then, adieu. OLIVE KING.

Biographical Sketches.

DON CARLOS.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

Don Carlos de Bourbon, Duke of Madrid, whom his adherents style King of Spain, was born on the 30th of March, 1848. The place of his birth was a small hotel in Laybach, a town in the Austrian States. His father was Don Juan de Bourbon, the second son of that Don Carlos, brother of Ferdinand VII., who, in the seven years' civil war, so perseveringly asserted his claim to the Spanish crown; his mother, Doña Maria Beatrix, being daughter of the Grand Duke of Modena.

At the birth of Don Carlos, no royal rejoicings took place. His parents, who had been married but one year, were hurrying from the advancing tide of revolution towards Vienna.

"This noble Prince," says a writer—a Carlist, by the way—"born in exile, and nursed in adversity, has an examples before him in his own family—the good faith and generosity of his grandfather; the abnegation and high-mindedness of Maria Francesca, (grandmother of the present Don Carlos), and all the virtues of that model of womankind, his mother, the Archduchess Beatrix."

Don Carlos began his travels early. The exiled Spanish Bourbons were often on the wing. Don Juan and his wife went to England, where their second son, Alphonso, was born. From England the Archduchess returned to Modena with her two children, and, at the breaking out of the Austrian war in 1859, the Grand Ducal States were seized, and she again became a fugitive. In Prague, where the exiles resided for several years, the education of Don Carlos was confided to a Spanish ecclesiastic. The history of Spain was his favorite study. Later in life, he wrote part of a history of Sayme, King of Arragon, the scourge of the invading Moors. But more stirring events interfered with the completion of this work.

In 1863, the Archduchess Beatrix and her sons removed to Venice, where they met, a year later, the widowed Duchess of Parma, sister of the Count de Chambord—a name which has become as familiar to those interested in European politics as that of the subject of this sketch. The eldest daughter of the Duchess of Parma was Margaret, a young lady who was distinguished for her piety, intellectual attainments, and natural grace. Having, without difficulty, obtained his mother's consent, Don Carlos—then in his seventeenth year—made a formal proposition for the hand of the Princess Margaret, who was more than a year younger. They were both too young to marry, and the ceremony was postponed until 1867. In the February of that year, Don Carlos de Bourbon and Margaret of Parma were married.

The bride and bridegroom proceeded to the Castle of Ebenzweyer, the property of the Count de Chambord. Don Carlos paid several visits to London and Paris about a year later for the purpose of conferring with some of his leading partisans.

Things in Spain were coming to a crisis. The storm that has since broken with such fury, in its course involving not only Spain, but France and Germany, was then threatening. The former friends of Queen Isabella were wavering in their allegiance. Many in high positions would have been willing to place her son, the Prince of Asturias, on the throne, but he was too young for that purpose, and they were forced to look for a king among foreign princes. There was also the Liberal party, rapidly increasing in numbers, who would tolerate no compromise between a republic and the expulsion of the Bourbons. And so the crown of Spain—the royal insignia of the proudest people on earth—went a-begging. How had the mighty fallen since the days of the Conquistador and of haughty Ferdinand and queenly Isabella!

Don Juan de Bourbon yielded to the counsels of the Legitimist leaders, and renounced his claim to the Spanish throne in favor of his son, Don Carlos, who had in 1868 issued a manifesto, called a council of his partisans, assumed the title of Duke of Madrid, and took up his residence on the Spanish frontier, to watch for his opportunity. At Gratz, the Duchess of Madrid gave birth to her daughter, Blanca, and shortly after this event came the news of the insurrection at Cadiz. The duke hastened to Paris. Another council was held. Don Juan, who had made an unsuccessful attempt some years before, and who had been released from prison on condition of promising not to engage in another struggle for the throne, could not honorably take part in the coming contest, and so, as has been mentioned, he gave way in favor of his son, hailed by the Carlist as Charles VII.

A writer in a recent number of Blackwood's Magazine, gives the following particulars of a visit made to Don Carlos during his sojourn in Paris. Don Carlos and his wife occupied modest apartments near the church of the Madeleine. After waiting for some minutes, they, (friends of the writer in Blackwood,) were conducted by a Spanish nobleman into the presence of the noble personages whom he addressed as king and queen.

"One of the visitors had the advantage of some experience of Spanish habits and manners, from a pretty long residence in Spain, and he recognized in the prince the quiet dignity and self-possession distinctive of the Spanish gentleman. He found him, perhaps, contrary to what he had expected, of comely presence, above the middle height, well-formed, of manly bearing, with regular features, though not unlike the Spanish Bourbons, rather heavy in the lower part of the face, dark complexion, expressive black eyes, and thick black mustache. The prince was simply dressed, and without ribbon or decoration of any kind.

"The princess, who wore a plain white dress, was rather low in stature, with fair hair and blue eyes, remarkable more for the sweet and gentle expression which animated them than for regularity of features. The prince pointed to the visitors to be seated, and then sat down himself by the side of his wife. The princess spoke English well, and the prince, though apparently familiar with the language, seemed to prefer French or Spanish."

Don Carlos bases his claim to the Spanish crown on the Salic law which excludes women from the succession. Ferdinand VII., grand-uncle of Don Carlos, repealed the Salic law by his last will in bequeathing the crown to his eldest daughter. His brother, Don Carlos Maria Isidro, grandfather of the present Don Carlos, flew to arms, and then followed the disastrous seven years' war, which ended unfortunately for Don Carlos the elder, who was despoiled of what he deemed his birthright.

But the opponents of Don Carlos invalidate his claim by urging that Ferdinand's abrogation of the Salic law was not an arbitrary innovation. It was the Salic law itself that was the innovation, and that Queen Isabella was sovereign of Castile in her own right; that Charles V. of Germany and I. of Spain, derived his dominions from his mother, Juana, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella.

If these facts are admitted, the partisans of Don Carlos cannot reasonably boast of his right of succession to the crown of Spain.

Early in 1872, the Duke of Madrid entered Spain, and he was soon joined by numbers of badly-armed, undisciplined peasants. They kept up a sort of guerilla warfare, but were defeated at Orosquieta and dispersed.

For a time he remained in obscurity; but suddenly it was rumored that he was again in Spain. He was received in the frontier by the Marquis of Valdespina, Lizarage and other chiefs. The Carlists had increased in numbers, and shouts of "Viva Carlos VII." were plentiful. His receptions in the villages on his route, the reports say, were enthusiastic in the highest degree.

Judging from his utterances and manifestoes it would appear that Don Carlos means well. But then it is so easy to govern a kingdom on paper and in imagination, but so hard to govern in reality!

OBSERVATIONS.

BY MAX ADELER.

[Editors will please bear in mind that the following Observations by Max Adeler, in common with the other original contents of THE POST, are copyrighted. We give this notice on account of the constant "appropriation" of Max Adeler's articles, without the requisite credit being given either to the writer or the paper.—*Ed. Sat. Eve. Post.*]

—Originally Higgins was a baggage-smasher on the Blank and Blank railroad, but somebody left him some money and he bought a farm, and settled down as an agriculturist. He had almost forgotten his old habits and propensities as the years went by, when, one day, while he was in town, he happened to pass a trunk store, where several trunks and valises were standing out upon the pavement. Instantly a flood of recollections poured over his soul, and he felt himself impelled by some irresistible power to indulge in his former pastime. He leaped upon an empty trunk and stamped it with his feet. Then he seized it, and bumped it against the pavement three or four times; then he jammed it against a lamp-post, and got a paving stone and pounded it, and butted it up against the wall, and spat on it and swore. And he dragged the carpet-bags through the mud, and ripped open the valises with his knife, and then he rushed into the store and had convulsions on the floor because there were several hundred trunks in there, and he knew he wouldn't have time to smash the whole stock to atoms before nightfall. He settled the bill next morning in an alderman's office, for, although he explained to the trunk man that his conduct was only a little freak that he couldn't help because the associations of the past overwhelmed him when he saw that baggage, the man betrayed an indisposition to manifest sympathy with a victim of psychological phenomena of that particular description.

—Last winter they had new furnaces put in the cellar of the church of St. Sarcophagus, where we go. But somehow they didn't work well. The first time the fire was put in them was on Saturday morning, and on Sunday the smoke was so dense in the church that nobody could see the clergyman. The man had put the stove-pipe into the hot-air flue. Next Saturday night the fires were lighted, but on Sunday morning only the air immediately under the roof was warm, and as the congregation couldn't very comfortably roost around on the rafters, they nearly froze to death. The sexton was then instructed to make the fire on Thursday, in order to give the church a chance to become thoroughly heated. He did so, and early Sunday morning the furnaces were so choked up with ashes that the fires went out, and again the thermometer in the front pews marked zero. Then the sexton received orders to make that fire on Thursday, and to sit there and watch it until church time on the following Sabbath. He did, and both furnaces were in full blast at the appointed hour. That was the only warm Sunday we had last winter. The mercury was up to eighty out of doors, while in the church everybody was in a profuse perspiration, and the bellows-blower at the organ fainted twice. The next Sunday the sexton tried to keep the fires low by pushing in the dampers, and consequently the church was filled with coal-gas, and the choir couldn't sing, nor could the minister preach without coughing every minute. That afternoon the sexton took up the cast-iron register in the floor, while he examined the flue to see if anything was the matter. He thought there was, and he went into the cellar for a moment to fix it. While he was gone, old Mrs. Magruder came in to hunt her hymn book, and she accidentally walked into the hole, and was subsequently dragged out in an asphyxiated condition, and that night one of the furnaces burst and nearly burned the sanctuary down. They were both sold out at auction on the next Tuesday by a disgusted people, and now things are better, only Mrs. Magruder never passes the register when she comes to church without clinging to a pew and muttering her prayers as she goes up the aisle.

—Mrs. Brown, of Camden, wants a divorce from her husband on account of his brutality. She says he never beats her; he gives her plenty of money, he never refuses to let her buy bonnets, and he professes to love her, but she can't stand a man who will never keep step with her. Brown is tall and she is short, and somehow he can't get his legs to work right. They agreed to start off, whenever they went walking, with the left foot, but Brown generally forgot and led off with his right foot; and then, while she was trying to get in step with him, he would try to catch step with her, and after both of them had been shuffling around upon the pavement for five minutes or so in a most absurd manner, they would go ahead out of step just as before. And then, when Brown would endeavor to take short steps like hers, his gait was so ridiculous as to excite remark; and when she tried to take long strides like his, people stopped and looked at her in the street and thought she was crazy. Then she strove to take two steps to his one, but she found that one of his was equal to two and a half of hers, and when she undertook to make that fractional number in order to keep with him, he frowned at her and said, "If you're goin' to dance the polka-mazourka upon the public highway, I'm goin' home." So now Mrs. Brown wants a divorce. She can't stand it any longer. It is very sad that the happiness of an affectionate family and the love of two immortal souls should be destroyed by any cause, but particularly is it melancholy that so much misery should be created by the abominable inadjustability and obstinacy of the legs of a man named Brown.

—In one of the sketches of the career of the French Marshal, Bazaine, recently published in a daily paper, we find the statement that "Bazaine delights in combat. He is never happier than when the leaden missiles of death are whistling about him." We have always believed that there was a difference between us and Bazaine, and now we have discovered what it is. We do *not* delight in combat, and we are *not* happy when the bullets whistle about us. Our military experience has not been as extended as Bazaine's. We were only out with the Pennsylvania militia; but yet we saw enough to convince us that we would never care much about standing in "the imminent and deadly breach," if there was another man there with a gun who wanted us to leave, and that we would never yearn "to seek the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth," unless we were positively certain that the cannon was empty. No man is less afraid of a cannon than we are when it is not loaded. We could stand in front of one for years without the quiver of a muscle. But Bazaine is not thus. He is disconsolate and miserable and bilious, unless somebody is banging at him with a shot gun, or trying to stir him up between the ribs with a bayonet. His idea of bravery is to stand still and let the enemy shoot balls into his legs and blow him apart with shells. Ours is to move on; not in reckless haste, but with as much speed as is consistent with dignity and a due regard for the celerity of the foe. About twelve miles an hour was the fastest time our militiamen made when they wanted to get off of the field. They excelled in falling back. It was our favorite manœuvre; but the bloodthirstiest veteran that ever plunged his sword hilt-deep in human gore, could not have advanced with greater calmness than we did when the enemy began to retreat. Bazaine himself would have shed tears to see the writer dashing around Harrisburg with his squad, frantic with eagerness to shed the blood of Confederates who were at that moment crossing the Potomac river sixty miles away.

—The Tuttles and the O'Flukes, although living next door to each other, are not on speaking terms. The Tuttles, it seems, claim to be of aristocratic origin, while Mrs. O'Fluke, it is well known, is the daughter of a rag-picker, and her husband is rich and ignorant; so the Tuttles look down on the O'Flukes, and that makes the O'Flukes mad. It may be as well to state that Mr. Tuttle is near-sighted, and that Mrs. O'Fluke not only has red hair, but she can carry a five-hundred pound cooking-stove up-stairs without drawing an extra breath. The other day Tuttle came home and found, as he thought, his little girl making mud pies in the gutter in front of the house. As he had often forbidden her to do this, he became angry, and rushing at her he picked her up and began to spank her in a singularly energetic manner. It so happened that he was mistaken. It was Mrs. O'Fluke's youngest child, and what was worse, Mrs. O'Fluke saw him whipping the babe. Those who were present say that it is perhaps probable that no red-haired woman ever came down-stairs and pounced through a front door as quickly as Mrs. O'Fluke did, since the sun first shone upon a fallen world. Mr. Tuttle perceived his mistake just as she appeared upon the scene. He started to run, and she pursued him. When the parade had gone around the block a couple of times Mr. Tuttle's wind began to fail, and the warm-haired avenger was almost up to him. He darted up the alley and tried to spring over his back fence. He had just reached the top when the infuriated O'Fluke arrived. She seized him by the leg and removed him suddenly from his roost. "Got it splitting kindling wood," was what he told his friends the next day when they inquired respecting the black and blue condition of his eye. But Mrs. O'Fluke knows better, and she gloats over the circumstance.

—Perhaps only those of our readers who live in the vicinity of Philadelphia will be interested in this story, but it will do to tell, and it is true. A German, named, we will say, Schmidt, lives at Manayunk. He came to the city a few days ago, and after pretty generous indulgence in lager beer, he got on the cars to go home. On the way up he fell asleep, and when he awoke he was in Downingtown, many a long mile beyond his destination. He was provoked; but he spent the night at a hotel, and in the morning after a few more glasses of beer, he stepped on the train to go home. He went asleep again during the journey, passed Manayunk, and woke up just as the train entered Philadelphia when he was mad. He jumped off of the cars, and got on a train which had just started up the road, and resolved to keep awake this time at all hazards. He did; but what was his horror to perceive, in a few moments, that the train switched off at the junction, and sped on its way to Germantown! When he dismounted at the depot in that place he selected a few of the most robust adjectives in the German language with which to express his feelings. Then he got on another train to return to the city, but he was so blinded with rage that he did not perceive that it was the train for Chestnut Hill. Upon arriving at the latter place, he got out, and after reflecting whether it wouldn't perhaps be better to telegraph home for his winter clothes, he determined not to, and with a hearty curse hurled at those wretched railroad monopolies, he walked across country to Manayunk. He drives in town now in a buggy when he wants to make a visit.

☞ Words show the wit of man, but actions his meaning.

THE SPANISH MAIDEN'S SONG.

BY JOHN LOCKE.

When the feast is spread in the marble hall,
And the wine from the beaker flows;
And the rich, quaint arras upon the wall,
In the light of the crossed glaives;
When the cavaliers sing and the maidens play,
And dance to the light guitar—
I fly from the revel to think of him
Who is over the mountains far.

He loved me, aye, with a burning love—
With a love that was half divine;
And seasons vanished, and moons waxed dim,
And his fond heart still was mine;
And he told me of it in the moonlight grove,
As we sat 'neath the orange tree,
That ever and aye through the starry night
He was thinking of love and me.

Full often we sat in those grand, green woods,
In the shade of the chestnut trees;
Where the birds in the summer-time sweetly sing,
And the olive-balm scents the breeze:
And we told our love in those dingle depths,
Where the lilies wave o'er the streams,
And the fairies revel the live-long night
In the light of the pale moonbeams.

And can it be that his heart has changed—
And changed like a wild March day?
Are the passionate hopes of his early years
All vanished like dreams away?
No! Isidore, no! the world may roll,
And seasons vanish and flee;
But the greenest spot in thy memory still
Is sacred to love and me.

Ah! his spirit must pine in some dungeon keep,
Or be exiled o'er the sea;
For he never would tarry so long, so long,
If his strong, fleet limbs were free:
Ah! the sorrow is gnawing his heart, I know,
Through the live-long night and day;
Like a serpent coiled in a rose's breast,
Slow nibbling its bloom away!

Come, Isidore, come, there is no change,
Old places are still the same;
The nightingale sings through the orange grove,
In the glow-worm's dancing flame:
The lovers still meet in the greenwood dell
Where the silvery cascade falls—
Come! Isidore, come to your lonely love—
'Tis your own fond Ida calls!

A HIDDEN WRONG;

OR,

Too Trusting and Too Fair.

BY MRS. ELIZABETH MORRISON.

CHAPTER XIX.

LITTLE PAT MAKES A MISTAKE.

Marian's courage and spirit offered stronger opposition than he looked for to the ruffian who had attacked her.

He cursed her savagely as despite his restraining grasp she contrived to loosen one of her hands from his hold, and frantically strove with it to free her mouth from the suffocating gag he had thrust into it.

It was a struggle for life itself, and the poor girl threw all her strength into her efforts as she almost writhed out of his hold, and beat and tore to get her breath.

Enraged to find her so powerful, he struck her violently like the brute he was, and the sharp and cruel nature of the blow, aided by her prolonged struggle, deprived her of consciousness for the moment, so that she fell senseless at his feet.

"There, that's easier," he muttered, stooping over her and thrusting his hands into the pockets of her coat, "why couldn't the fool be quiet and have saved trouble, in place of fighting like a wild-cat, and making bother. Where is the cursed trinket! Curse her, if she has made way with it, I'll throttle her. Ah, no, here it is, all right; and so I'm off my pretty wench. I have no time to waste, and even now I may be observed."

He looked cautiously round as he issued from the lot, but no one was apparently within view, and, reassured by the solitude of the street, he made off with great speed, carrying the locket that Marian had discovered in the pocket of Lucy's coat with him.

He was no sooner out of sight than the boy Pat, who had been hiding behind a low pile of lumber on the other side of the way, issued forth, and, peering around him no less carefully to find if the villain were really gone, ran across the street into the lot where he found poor Marian scared and dizzy trying to rise from the ground with her hands pressed to her forehead.

"By jing," exclaimed the little fellow, using his favorite outlet for excitement, "if it ain't Miss Marian that that there bully swell's been insulting and robbing! What did he take from you, miss? I saw him have something in his hand, and he's mean enough to steal a fip if he wanted it to buy a drink. Oh, I know him, and so does our Moll, and she'll be on his tracks pretty soon, the villain!"

But Marian was too much shocked and shaken to understand or explain anything at first.

She could only gaze in a bewildered way at the eager and sympathetic boy, and put her hand to her head as if to steady its dizzy whirl.

Presently she seemed to have a sudden thought, and under its influence she felt in the pocket where she had put the locket.

"It was that the ruffian wanted, then," she said, "it was not mine, and I did not think it was valuable enough to tempt any one to do such a wicked, cowardly deed. Who could he be, and how did he know I had it?"

"I can't tell how he found out you had any jewelry, miss," Pat answered, "perhaps he followed you, and saw you look at it, but he's wicked enough to do anything in the world. I know him, so does Moll. Come on, miss, your clothes look all straight now, and you can lean on me if you're weak, while I tell you how I'm going to have that wretch punished for hurting and frightening you. If I was as big as him I'd punch his head off, I would; but Moll is going to fix him. I put her up to it, and keep biling with anger agin him. When I go home I'll tell her about this last trick of his'n, and she'll be ready to skin him for it."

"No, no; please don't make a talk about such things, Pat, dear," entreated Marian, timidly, "I am afraid of these people, and now that my sister is safe at home, I do not want even to see or hear of them again."

"Yes, I know'd she got off," Pat said, grinning, "I was jolly glad of it, and it does me good to hear old Mother Fox a raving about her. But what I came up to-night for was to give you a word of warning. Look out! Old Meg Worthy ain't to be beat, and she's on your sister's track. She's sure that she'll have her back again or die for it, and she'll give you trouble if you ain't mighty sharp."

"O, dear! I trust Lucy will not see her," Marian exclaimed, remembering her sister's discontent and listlessness, and fearing the effect of any adverse influence that might come between them.

"You needn't be afraid of her winning the young lady back by fair means, she won't try that; she trusts to cunning and force to kidnap her, for Miss Lucy made such desperate efforts to get away that she knows she couldn't coax her back. She'll steal her, though, if she gets a chance, and she's bound to make one, too. She's got some new spies on the track, I guess, so you'd better be shy of every one that speaks to you, or looks after you in the street, and remember that I'm on the look-out now, and I wont allow no fooling."

The little fellow drew himself up with such an air that had poor Marian been less alarmed and sorrowful, she must have burst into laughter at the sight; but, besides the hurt she had received from the miscreant's blow, every nerve in her body was shaken with the fright of the encounter she had had, so, thanking Pat for his good will, and begging him not to forget to warn her of any danger he might discover, she parted from him and made what haste she could to reach home.

Pat stood gazing after her, muttering threats against any one who might attempt to molest or alarm her until she was out of sight.

When he turned to proceed on his own way he found himself addressed by a handsome young gentleman of fine appearance, who asked him in a hesitating and somewhat disturbed voice, who the young lady was who had just quitted him.

"That there one, do you mean, sir?" asked Pat, immediately becoming suspicious that the "new swell," as he mentally denominated him, was a spy of Meg Worthy's, who had mistaken Marian for her sister Lucy, "why that there young lady's agoing to be—that is—I mean to say she's a lovely girl what a very rich and influential gent has fallen in love with, and he's going to marry her as soon as he can arrange to have the job done in swell style."

Pat came out with this sudden invention in quite a triumphant manner.

"That's the best go I can get up," he thought to himself after uttering it very volubly, "it is bound to scare off old Meg's people, and so I'll blow some more."

"Yes," he continued aloud, seeing that the stranger stood still as if rooted to the spot. "She's engaged to this wealthy gent, and the reason he condescends to use such a poor miserable brat as I am for his messenger is, that he don't want no talk or gossip about the family, until he's ready to elevate 'em all into his lofty spear. Oh, he's a stunner, and she's in big luck now, I tell you she is!"

Perceiving with great delight that his narration was producing a visible effect on his listener, who clutching the nearest support to him, seemed to shake as if from a sudden ague, the foolish lad went on to enlarge on his absurd story, mixing fact and fiction so cunningly together, that his words carried conviction with them, and the unhappy gentleman whose inmost heart they pierced, stretched out his hands imploringly and bade him cease.

"Oh, yes, I'll shut up, if that's your move," answered Pat readily, for having reached his last effort at lying he had nothing more to say; "but remember it was you who asked me to tell you, and I wouldn't have had no manners if I hadn't obliged a gentleman, you know."

"True," said his questioner in a broken voice, "I do not blame you, my boy," and he tossed him a piece of money, on the receipt of which Pat uttered an exclamation of surprise, for it was not the way with Meg's people to pay handsomely for advance information.

"Blowed if I don't think I've been off the track," thought Pat, with some compunctions, after pocketing the coin and starting homeward. "I got a couple of squints at his face and it seemed as if I'd seen it afore. Where was it? Oh, I know now, he's the swell that came with the doctor the day poor Miss Lucy nearly throwed up her sponge. Yes, by jing! he's the very chap and maybe he didn't mean no harm. Well, it's all right, anyhow, it will make 'em afraid to come fooling round, and she hasn't no time to waste on fellows, she's full of good feelings for others, and I ain't agoing to have her bothered by sneaking chaps. So there!"

Having thus justified his romancing to himself, Pat made the best of his way homeward, but the victim of his unwitting falsehood, who, as he had guessed, was no other than the young artist, wandered slowly and to himself unconsciously over the lonely pavement.

Shocked and almost paralyzed by the revelation to which he had listened, he could only murmur distractedly:

"This then was the impassable barrier between us, this then was the mysterious cause of separation that I must not question or strive to understand. Oh, Marian, Marian!"

Again the uncontrollable agony of his soul overcame him, and his whole form shook in the passionate throes of grief with which his poor heart bewailed its lost idol.

"I could have borne to live on, parted and wretched, but still believing in her, still trusting to her constancy," he continued, "but this rude awakening, this horrible shock that shows me a miserable reality of faithlessness, a fickle nature that I had clung to in blind, unwavering trust, an idol on whose constancy I would have pledged my life—broken, shattered and fallen like the poor heart that adored it!"

Long and weary were his wanderings to and fro and up and down in the chill wintry streets that night, while the struggle kept madly on within his breast between his heart's despair and his manly courage to endure.

Oh, Pat, poor beggar and scamp, reared in vice and taught dissimulation and cunning as a trade, little did your silly brain realize the terrible pangs your foolish plan to help your favorite young lady had inflicted on the one she valued more than life itself!

It was past midnight and the empty streets were cold and dreary, when Eugene turned his steps homeward—not to the aristocratic precincts of Lexington Terrace, but toward the queer little domicil of the sick Frenchman, and as he went his determination that had at length come to his rescue from the helplessness of despair, took this form.

"Yes, life and duty are the same," he thought, "even when the light of joy goes out, and only the hard reality of disappointment remains to me. I must work on and press forward till the end is gained, though no smile waits to crown me there, I will win my own name and gain my own rights for the sake of the dead who have been wronged, let life be as empty and hopeless as it may!"

CHAPTER XX.

LUCY FINDS THE WAY TOO BUGGED.

When Marian reached home the night of her adventure with the wretch who had robbed her of the locket, she found that her mother had retired to bed with a headache, and that Allan had too followed her example, having returned from college quite feverish from the effects of a bad cold.

Lucy was sitting on the lounge with her face leaning on her arm, and she did not look up as she imparted this information to her returning sister, but added in a weary tone:

"What could have kept you so long. I'm sure I thought you would never come, and you had only to go to the trimming store?"

Marian was not equal to an explanation just then, so she made some kindly answer in a low tone and trying to smooth her disordered dress and hair sat down to the sewing that must be done, though her trembling hands made difficult work of the trimming.

Lucy looked up presently, and even to her abstracted gaze her sister's pallor and marks of mental suffering were apparent.

"Something has happened to you, Marian," she cried in affright; "see, there's a cut on your chin and two or three long scratches on your hands. What can it have been?"

Begging her to be calm, and earnestly enjoining on her the necessity of preserving their secret from the other two members of the family, Marian, in a subdued tone, related the incident of her attack and robbery, and begged her sister's forgiveness for the mistake she had made in substituting her coat for her own.

Lucy listened with colorless cheeks and parted lips—and when Marian concluded, she broke out in a terrified cry.

"Oh, it must have been some of those wretches up at Todd's place who did it," she sobbed, "those dreadful creatures that rob and steal so constantly. Mrs. Worthy gave me the thing one day when she was in a good humor—and I hated to look at it, and am glad that it is gone."

"Yes," said Marian, solemnly, "if it came from those people, I am truly thankful that it will never be in your sight again, dear sister. I wish I could destroy every trace and vestige of that time, and with it all that could ever come between you and your home."

She said this so earnestly, and with such sorrowful tears, that Lucy could not choose but know her meaning. Still she did not speak! she let her head droop within her sister's embracing arms, and felt Marian's warm tears of love on her own cold cheek, but the secret that had come between them, and made so great a chasm in their girlish lives, sealed her lips; she could not tell all, and so she did not utter a single word.

The day of Mr. Barton's funeral had been damp and gusty, and the chilly rain seemed to have left both Allan and his mother with continuous colds.

The widow was weak and nervous, and complained constantly of a pain in her head, while her son began to have a dry, sharp cough, that reminded Marian most uncomfortably of her father's.

Still he kept on steadily with his studies, and talked of a private course of instruction in practical engineering, which would cost a good round sum, as if it were a matter of course, and easily managed, out of the family purse.

His mother did not remind him of its impossibility, but by saying constantly that she must contrive some way to arrange it, appeared to entertain the plan herself.

Marian noted this, and also that Mrs. Blanchard seemed to be a constant visitor at the house in her absence, two facts which taken together rendered her very uneasy.

"My mother receives that woman's money," she was forced to confess to herself, and the bitterness of this discovery was daily increased by the apparently increasing influence Mrs. Blanchard gained over them all.

Mrs. Barton constantly repeated the words that the wily woman put in her mouth, and they were always against Eugene, though sometimes so cunningly disguised, that Marian was forced to remain silent and wonder at the exhaustless malignity of the woman who claimed to be the artist's mother.

Lucy did not seem to pay much attention to this, or indeed, anything else that went on around her. Her mind and thoughts seemed wandering, and her pale face grew more and more wasted and unhappy, until one could scarcely recognize a trace of the girlish beauty that had made her so much admired even in her own family a few months before.

Both sisters worked at Madame Tinzler's, though Lucy had unfortunately won that person's strong dislike by her inattention and listlessness of manner, and the personal antipathy she felt for her employer, which she took no pains to conceal.

This made Marian very uneasy, and she tried constantly to smooth it over, and by doing far more than her own share of the sewing to gain allowance for her sister.

Mrs. Blanchard had early informed herself of their engagement through their mother, and they soon saw from their work-room window, that her carriage stopped frequently at the costumer's door.

"I am having a skating-dress made for my daughter Violet," she explained to Marian, one day when they met in the show-room; "and I have told Mad. Tinzler how much interested I am in you, and how much I hope for your business success."

"You are very good," said Marian, coldly, and with a courtesy, she left the room.

She not only disliked but distrusted the speaker most heartily; and her appearance at the costumer's, filled her with dread as to the future.

"She never comes near me without bringing some evil in her track," she thought—"Heaven grant she may not mean mischief to Lucy!"

She shuddered at the thought—and was relieved to find afterward that there really was a green velvet skating suit to be made for Miss Blanchard, and that so far her mother had told the truth.

They had been already a month in Madame Tinzler's service, and the overwork done by Marian in her determination to make up for her sister's short-comings, was already telling on her strength and health, although she appeared quite unconscious of its taxing character.

Her employer valued her work highly, and gave her the best and most particular things to do; but her prejudice against Lucy seemed to increase rather than diminish, until at last she grew into the habit of freely expressing her feelings on the subject.

"You must like being a slave, I think, Miss Barton," she said, when she paid her one evening, according to custom, for their joint week's labor, and saw Marian, as usual, hand over the sum in full to Lucy to divide it in halves. "What if she is the eldest sister, you are the one who does the work while she dawdles, and you're a goose if you don't take the pay that belongs to you, that's all I can say."

"And that is far too much, if you please," Marian said, decidedly, as she waited for her sister to move away before she spoke; "I am very much attached to my sister, and cannot bear to have her spoken to unkindly or unjustly. I am very much obliged to you for your goodness in giving us employment; but I must beg that you will also consider my feelings, and do not make me so unhappy by your thoughtless words."

"Oh, fudge and sentiment," said the other, laughing coarsely. "I was told that you had ridiculous notions about self-sacrifice and such nonsense—but go ahead and be a fool if you want to;" and she tossed her head and shrugged her shoulders as she turned away.

Marian followed her sister and found her waiting for her near the door of the lower hall. She was silent, and continued so as they walked home together, though Marian tried to talk cheerfully on other subjects, and the anxious girl was forced to suspect that Lucy had heard Mad. Tinzler's unkind remarks, and was brooding over them.

Poor Lucy; patient, loving and charitable as Marian was, she was obliged to confess that her sister's nature had been much changed and perverted by her trouble.

She was suspicious of every one, and if any one looked at her twice, she seemed to feel herself marked and suspected in return. She had but two moods, either the abstraction that deepened into moodiness, or the restless suspicion that was roused by a chance word, and seemed at times to possess her like a torturing spirit. As she walked by Marian's side, she said in a low tone—

"That woman wants to insult me, Marian. I see she does!"

"Oh, no, dear, she's only coarse and careless in her own nature, and so grown inconsiderate of others. Do not let us think of her, Lucy.

Marian drew her sister's arm through hers as she spoke, and pressed it fondly to her side, but Lucy pursued the subject steadily.

"Some one has told her something of me," she said, and her white cheek flushed a painful scarlet. "Some wicked, lying coward has tried to injure me," she continued; "but I don't care for myself, it is for you I care, Marian," and her voice broke into a husky sob.

Marian, with a sharp pain at her heart, smiled cheerfully.

"Oh, what a silly fancy, my darling," she said, bravely; and then altering her tone by a strong effort, she said, "I'll tell you what makes madame cross of late, dear; you neglect to bow to her when you go in, and you don't do the trimming as beautifully as you know how. Oh, do I not wish that I could manage to make as many pretty devices as you can in puffs and frills—would not I excel as a costumer's workwoman then?"

Her assumed lightness silenced, but did banish her sister's complaints. She had begun to suspect her employer of being her enemy, and the feeling grew daily.

It was a fortnight later, and the family were threatened with the added care of another invalid, for Allan's cough was shorter and dryer than ever, so that he had received permission to study at home and have a special morning recitation before the regular classes, so as to avoid the effect of night air on his weak lungs.

Mrs. Barton being at the best short-sighted, was urging him forward with the promise of being able "to manage the private lessons somehow," and Marian was divided between home care and business care, when one unlucky day Madame Tinzler's prejudice against Lucy brought about an unpleasant denouement.

The sisters were busily making delicate silk dresses for a spectacular drama in which a pattern had to be closely followed, but Lucy's absent-mindedness prevented her from properly attending to this fact.

Marian's watchful eye discovered the mistake she was making in sewing the wrong parts of a curiously cut skirt together, and she hastened to remedy it, but Mad. Tinzler was equally quick, and she called out angrily—

"Miss Barton, let that alone, and attend to your own pattern; if your sister is too deeply engaged in thought to give an idea to the work in hand, let her suffer the consequences. You have done quite enough in that direction already."

"Please excuse me," Lucy said quickly, and with a flushing face. "I see where I've made the mistake, and can rip it out."

"Oh, yes, I dare say, and pretty work it will look like when it is ripped out. We don't buy silks to have them butchered and then ripped; we're not fond of wasting material, nor well enough used to *making mistakes* to enjoy it!"

Lucy's color dyed her very forehead for a moment, and then it vanished, leaving her whole face as white as death. The woman's temper was up, her eyes snapped with anger, and she had no pity.

"I think we've had quite enough of this fooling from her ladyship yonder," she said, turning to Marian; "she has sat here snipping and botching the best material, while you, Miss Marian, have made yourself a slave so as *to keep her among decent people.*"

"Madame Tinzler," cried Marian, aghast, and she caught her sister's arm with a restraining grasp.

"Oh, yes," exclaimed the costumer, contemptuously; "you expect to awe every one by your airs, and keep us all at a distance, but I happen to know something about that young lady not much to her advantage, and I don't intend to have her here any longer."

Lucy rose tremblingly; she looked the angry woman in the face, and her look was by no means appeasing.

"To be sure!" cried the costumer, "she means to confront me and awe me into silence with her theatrical airs, but I'm not to be overcome by such as she. I'd advise her to go and look after the reputation she lost on her trip to New York. Ha! ha! ha!"

There were half a dozen girls in the next room to the sisters, who hitherto had occupied chairs in Madame Tinzler's own apartment, and these persons heard every word of their employer's tirade.

Marian had sprung forward, as if to place her hands over the woman's lips, but madame moved back, and stood almost between the doors as she uttered her last words.

The sight of the two sisters suddenly seemed to quiet her. Marian had thrown her arm round Lucy, and placed herself before her as if to ward off personal blows.

"Please be silent, madame," she said, calmly and gravely, "until we can leave your house; your words do not in the least affect me, but they are coarse and meant to be cruel; we will not be long escaping from the sound of them. Come, Lucy, dear. You are not so foolish as to cry, I hope, my precious sister. Come, let us be gone."

"I never said a word but praise of you, Miss Marian, and no one can say they ever heard me," said Madame Tinzler, her anger spent and her prudence returning.

"This is the day our week is up, and as you never engaged us beyond from week to week, you need no warning Madame Tinzler," Marian said with business-like calmness.

"I am willing to keep you," said her employer almost mildly. "You're a good worker, and never gave me reason to find fault with you once. I don't send *you* away, remember that, Miss Marian."

"I am going with my dear sister," said the girl, quite calmly. "Nothing in the world would tempt me to remain another hour where she has been so wickedly and unjustly insulted. She is too good and pure to feel more than shocked by your cruel words; but she shall never be subjected to their repetition. I do not know where you heard such a false and slanderous story as you have hinted at, but whoever says one word against my sister is a cowardly liar, and Heaven will punish all such in its own righteous way."

Her beautiful eyes beamed full of their own strong light as she spoke, and there was no tears or sign of weakness on her fair young face. One doubt of Lucy's innocence made her belief in it firm and unflinching, and when she saw her sister's trembling figure and death-white face, she felt it was no time for shrinking or tears on her part.

Madame Tinzler felt the influence of the young girls strong spirit, and almost apologized as she placed their money on the table before the sisters.

"People may speak in haste without meaning much harm," she said.

"I hope your meaning was not as bad as your words," Marian said, "but we can never remain in a place where such things are likely to be said. Come, Lucy dear."

They descended the stairs together, and saw Mrs. Blanchard's carriage drive past.

"She meant to drive us away from here," Marian said to herself, "where can she mean to pursue us to next!"

But to her sister she said aloud and cheerfully—

"Never mind Lucy, all we've got to do is to try again. Madame Tinzler's temper was not very good, perhaps we'll find a more amiable employer next time."

But Lucy answered with a half-smothered, heart-broken cry as she flung herself on her sister's breast.

"No, no, it will be always the same, there's a mark upon me that they all see, and they will hunt me to the death, they will, they will!"

CHAPTER XXI.

LUCY GIVES UP THE STRUGGLE.

Allan Barton was so deeply absorbed in his studies, and the ambitious plans resulting from his success in them, that he was not only negligent of the family interests and anxieties but even failed to pay proper attention to his own health.

Thus it transpired that when the sisters, after making a few trials for work at some establishments in the immediate neighborhood of Madame Tinzler, and being disappointed in each instance, returned home they found their mother looking greatly alarmed and excited about her son.

"He came home after the afternoon session," she said, "and his face was hot and blazing with fever. Instead of going right to bed as I begged him to do, he said he'd sit up awhile and try to finish some writing he had to do for his class next morning. Then he got to singing and whistling and throwing round his books, and I saw that he was quite flighty. You don't know how frightened I was; there was no one here to help me to get him to bed, and so I just ran out on the sidewalk to see if I could call in a neighbor, when as good fortune would have it, a young doctor passed by in his carriage and I hailed him. He used to know Eugene Blanchard I believe," she added rather hesitatingly as if she had suddenly remembered the risks she ran in employing any one who had been on good terms with that gentleman, but after an instant's consideration she concluded—"But I don't believe it will matter. Mrs. Blanchard need never see him, and he says he has seen Allan often with Eugene, and feels quite a warm interest in him."

"What has he done for Allan?" Marian asked, laying aside her walking-dress and putting on an apron ready to relieve her mother of household cares.

"Oh, he gave him different things and quieted him down in no time. Allan seems to mind him though he doesn't know me at all. He's asleep now, and the doctor says that he'll be much better when he wakes."

Lucy dropped into a chair with a hopeless gesture, as her mother left the room she turned to Marian and said drearily.

"Here is more trouble, and I have driven you away from a place where you had good pay, and you were quite a favorite with that woman."

"Hush, hush, I beg of you Lucy," implored the poor girl unable to bear any weak repining in her intense anxiety to discover some relief from the present difficulties. "Don't speak of my interests as if they could be separated from yours, nor allude to that coarse creature again. We will soon get some good place together and it is sure to come all right before long. Even this sad affliction has its advantage," she added, her old hopefulness coming to her aid. "Allan was getting ill, and would not stop to rest, this fever has forced him into what was actually necessary, and mother in her present occupation of mind will be spared, knowing anything about our little trouble, so pray don't be down-hearted. Bathe your face and forehead while I get supper, Lucy dear."

She stooped to kiss her as she spoke, and whispering the words, "Courage, love," in her ear, hurried away to attend to her household duties.

When Mrs. Barton returned from her son's bedside, she reported him still sleeping; and then turning wonderingly to Lucy, asked—

"Why don't you take off your bonnet, dear? And why do you look so pale and miserable?"

"Oh, I don't know, I can't tell, I'm tired and sick at heart!" burst out Lucy, and flung herself sobbing on the lounge.

"Now that comes of getting a fright," Marian said, soothingly. "Lucy's nerves are weak, and a horse ran away, startling everybody, just at the street corner, and then Allan's sudden illness frightened her still more. Go up and lie down, dear, and I'll bring you a cup of tea," urged her kind sister, doing her best to prevent her mother from suspecting poor, weak Lucy's miserable past and her present discontent and want of courage.

The runaway had indeed given her a momentary alarm, and Allan's sickness had added to the wretched gloom of her feelings, but Lucy Barton suffered from a deeper and subtler pain than fear or anxiety.

The consciousness of the cloud that hung upon her life and name, the war that raged in her poor soul between doubt and faith, and the bitter aching misery of waiting and hoping against hope, had all made her heartsick even unto death, and her weary nature shrank from the conflict that she had no strength to continue.

"Would to Heaven that I might die," she prayed as she sank upon her own pillow and sobbed and moaned in the silence of her own poor chamber.

But death does not come at the rash entreaty of a sick heart. Life had to be met, and Lucy found her sister ready and apparently hopeful for the contest as they went out together, leaving Allan better next morning, as the doctor had foretold.

They began systematically to go from place to place, trying the likeliest first, but allowing none to be left unsought.

In some they found the promise of future employment, in others the assurance that a week earlier they could have been engaged.

A few factories wanted experts at their particular article of trade, and were not willing to receive novices, however apt in other branches, and one or two were willing to take either of the sisters, though they had not work for both.

"We will keep together," Marian said, resolutely, for she had no peace if Lucy were out of her sight for an instant; "we may be forced to part at last, but not until we have exhausted every chance of remaining together."

Lucy scarcely seemed to see the necessity so clearly.

"You had better take the first place you can get, Marian, without regard to me," she said. "I can keep looking for one, and we need not both be idle."

"Time enough for that," Marian returned, "when all else fails;" and she went on with greater energy after each conversation.

The first day's walk was attended with no success, nor was the second nor the third. On the fourth Allan had a relapse into fever during the night, and her mother evinced so much alarm that Marian said they had better not leave home until the doctor came. So she sat down after breakfast to do some small article of sewing for the woman at the trimming store, while Lucy remained beside her brother, cooling his head and fanning him.

Presently she came down to say that he had fallen asleep, and while she was speaking the doctor, whom neither of the sisters had met before, entered the room.

At sight of him, Lucy lost every vestige of color and stood as if rooted to the spot, and even Marian was confused and overcome for a moment, but Mrs. Barton, who saw very little that was not directly shown to her, quite unconscious of the emotion of either said:

"This is Dr. Heatherton, girls, and I'm sure you should be glad to see and thank him for his great goodness to your poor brother. I'm sorry to say the poor boy isn't so well this morning, doctor, he's easier now, but he was so bad an hour or two ago that his sisters didn't like to go to their work and leave me alone with him."

With a quiet, respectful manner that had not a gleam of recognition in it, Dr. Heatherton bowed to both ladies, and expressed his concern at Allan's unfavorable symptoms. Then he passed up-stairs, and Marian stole a glance at Lucy who heaved a sigh of relief.

The sisters exchanged glances, but did not speak; each recognized the physician that had been called to Lucy in her time of peril, and both of them were thankful that his knowledge of faces or memory was so imperfect as to prevent a mutual recognition.

But Lucy would not stay to risk another interview, when his footsteps were heard descending she slipped from the room, and Marian saw him alone, and heard from his lips words of hope and comfort about her sick brother to whose recovery he seemed willing to devote all his energies.

The next day they started out together and Mrs. Barton said she was loath to be left alone with her sick son.

"But what can we do," she added, "the doctor says he must have plenty of good nourishment and your absence yesterday will make the pay come short this week when so much is needed?"

Lucy looked at Marian meaningly.

"It must be done," she whispered; "you *must* take the first place you can find alone and leave me to shift for myself."

"Not till everything else fails," Marian said, stoutly. "I am going to beg our grocer for a week's trust, and I think he will oblige us, before another goes by something must be found for both of us and it will all be right," Marian said. But that day nor the next did not justify Marian's hope, and at last necessity and repeated failures began to weaken her courage.

It was on the afternoon of the eighth day of their search for work that they both stopped by one accord in front of a very stylish store, in which perfumery and toilet articles, with fancy goods for gentlemen's wear, were sold.

In the window was a small bill bearing the words:

"A young lady to wait at the counter wanted."

"Go in there; I will wait here for you," Lucy said, and pushed her sister forward.

She was weak and exhausted looking, and seemed glad of an opportunity to stand leaning against the iron rail, that guarded the plate glass window, so Marian obeyed.

A whiskered and mustached gentleman, with a fancy necktie and very gay vest, came from a small inside compartment of the store that was approached by a draperied arch, to meet her.

He had a disagreeably familiar smile on his face, and his manner was not pleasant to Marian, but she conquered her instinctive aversion, and said she presented herself as an applicant for the position advertised in the window.

"I have had no experience as a saleswoman," she frankly confessed; "I should have to learn everything, but I am very willing, and not dull at taking instruction."

"Humph," observed the gentleman, "you look as if we might make something pretty nice out of you if, as you say, you're quick to take up ideas. My name is Pandar, and Miss Gimper, my manager, is absent just now, or I would decide at once in your favor."

He kept his bold and impudent gaze fixed on her while he spoke, and Marian's cheeks glowed with a resentful blush. Still she had arrived at that point that made inclination yield to necessity, and so she listened to his familiar and rather flippant summary of a store-girl's duties, in which he told her that their first business was to look pretty and coaxing.

"That's what does it with the gents," he remarked, "and our custom is principally of that kind. I can't conclude, however, until Miss G. comes back; she's boss here among the goods, but I rather think we can make you do. Just step in at nine to-morrow morning, and I'll tell you all about it."

Arriving at this understanding, Marian resisted his evident desire to hold her in further conversation, and joined her sister outside, to whom she related the most satisfactory part of the interview, passing over her objections in silence from her anxiety to spare Lucy the knowledge of all that was unpleasant.

"Then I look on you as provided for," the poor girl said, with a relieved sigh; "and now, as we have heretofore looked for everything together, let us part company; I will go up this way and you take that direction, and maybe we will find some place where we can work together, which will save you from taking this one if not, as I said, you're provided for, anyhow."

Some one pushed against them in passing as they stood talking thus, and whirled Lucy around so, that she staggered to recover her footing. Marian looked after this awkward creature, but Lucy who was trying to set her hat and dress straight, did not see who it was.

"When will we meet," said the former half, reluctantly.

"At home in a couple of hours," Lucy answered, hurrying off.

Marian followed her with a troubled look, for the rude woman who had come between them, was none other than Meg Worthy in her best clothes, and though Lucy had gone in an opposite direction, the woman's presence seemed like a bad omen.

As Marian went on regretting having parted with Lucy even for an hour, she found herself before a large cloak and mantilla store gazing absently into its windows.

A woman of middle age and neat appearance was seated within, and raising a pair of sharp, observant eyes looked at her through the glass closely for a minute or so, and then beckoned her to come in.

"Do you know of any good sewer in need of employment," this person inquired when Marian wonderingly obeyed her summons.

"Yes I do, two of them, my sister and myself," Marian answered eagerly.

"Ahem," said the lady with a searching look, "are you sure you could come at once, and stick to your work well? We want no deceptions nor breaking words with us, for good, honest, truthful girls willing to do their duty we give good pay, but we won't have any other."

With breathless eagerness Marian assured her that she and her sister were exactly suited to her needs, and learned in return that the salary was very much better than she had hitherto received from her employers. After some further directions all delivered in a very sharp and decided manner, and impressed on her mind with some severity, she promised to be at the store with her sister next morning *without fail*.

The lady repeated her last sentence emphatically, and said "we'll see, keep your word, and I'll keep mine," and Marian ran home all eagerness to relieve Lucy of further trouble and uneasiness.

She had been there before her, and gone out again, Mrs. Barton said, and after waiting an hour or two without recurring to the subject, Marian became very restless, and again spoke to her mother who had meantime been taking a nap.

"What did Lucy say when she left mother?"

"Lucy," repeated Mrs. Barton, "what, isn't she home yet? Why she only gave me your needle-book, and said you might need it before she came back, I thought you knew all about where she was going—some errand for Madame Tinzler, was it not?"

With a frightened face and wildly beating heart, Marian caught the needle-case from her mother's hand, but could not answer.

"Mother!" called Allan faintly from the room above, and Marian was left alone with a scrap of pencil-written paper that fell into her hand as she opened the needle-book.

"I can't stay," it said, "I must go and look for peace, that can only come in one form to me. I am a stone tied to your neck, dear, patient sister, and I cannot strive or struggle as nobly as you do. I am weighed down by the sense of my own misery, and every eye that looks at me carries a dart to wound my shrinking soul. I must fly from all, until I gain the right to be fearless. God bless you, my dear, dear Marian; and do not blame me for trying to spare you further misfortune from the presence of your unhappy but loving LUCY."

"Gone!" cried Marian, wildly, "gone! just when Heaven's mercy opened a way for us to begin again. Gone! when I began to hope, to feel at rest—and this after all the bitter price I've paid to get her back! Oh, Lucy, Lucy!"

She felt her head whirling wildly and her sight fled; all seemed dark and cold, and desolate, and with the note tightly crumpled in her hand, in a last effort to save her sister's secret, poor Marian Barton's strength and courage gave way at last, and she fell cold and senseless on the floor.

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 8.)

RED KELLY;

OR,

The Free Riders of the Plains.

BY CAPTAIN CARNES,

AUTHOR OF "WERTZAL, THE SCOUT," ETC.

CHAPTER XX.

At sunset, or a little after, in the southwest, appeared a glow something like an Aurora display, but which the borderer can distinguish to be the quivering, leaping flashes of a conflagration. The spectators query whether it is the prairie on fire or the flaming beacon of the marauding free-riders. They notice it brighten and diminish, and hold to the one point, and then they call out to each other that it is the freebooting incendiary.

"Before them goes war and destruction," exclaimed General Allison.

"An' arter 'em follers deth an' ther judgment," finished the old scout, Champ, watching, with restless and feverish glance, the dread signal of border outrage.

"You must have some idee, Champ, of the whereabouts of the fire?"

"Within two p'ints er platitude, an', bless yer soul, Lingum, let's prong scout er piece an' see what we ken see. I kelkerlate that ar's ther smok ov ther torment ov Beaufort, at er venter; 'taint no remove from Rutter's Mills, on ther little C——."

"I think, Champ," returned Vitee, "that we had better *ride* out; a horse can travel faster if we do not happen to be all the people that are astir on the plains."

"Granted; they measure ground farster, but it takes a bigger necat ter set 'em, in case yer want ter set."

"We'll each have his own way. You may walk, and I will mount, and keep alongside; but we cannot hope to be of service, as the burning is too many miles distant."

"But thar's a persentimunt in my bones," returned the scout, "that sumhow, an' somewhar, on ther flats, sumbody would be eggstatically pleased ter see ther slim, rovin figger of Champ. Cum, Vitee, my leetle man, start up yer hoss-mashine, an' I'll set my luvly mogerson toe-marks sou'-westerly."

The scout was following out one of those mysterious impressions that lead us oftentimes in such unpremeditated ways, and bring about such unlooked-for and startling results.

Vitee, through sympathy with his companion, followed, without for a moment foreseeing the development. They had advanced out the distance, perhaps, of three miles, when Champ seized his companion by the boot-strap, and brought him to a halt. He had heard the faint echo of a running steed.

"Halt!" said he, in a cautious tone. "I ken seem ter see a shadder crossin' ther moonlight yender. It's mighty onfavorable for skulkin'. Thar ain't but one, is thar?"

"No; only one," returned Vitee, making a telescope of his hand.

"Ho! wall, then, we might as well wait, as enyway."

On rushed the hard-rider, and Champ hallooed—

"Who goes thar? Halt!"

The horseman swung around, and dashed straight toward the waiting scouts.

"Champ!—bless God!" aspirated the young fellow. "Back here, at Baker's Creek, a party of outlaws have captured Sheriff Hume—or he is surrounded in the old Bradford cabin—he and Duffy, and they can't hold out against the score of fiends that have holed them. I was coming in another direction, and discovered the plot in time to turn and escape."

"Yer hoss! yer hoss, boy! They'll make short work with ther twenty agin ther two. Wait here till we git back," and Champ had swung the light fellow from the saddle and sprang up to the vacated seat. "Vitee, do yer hear! Griff and Duffy is—God ov Heaven, *whar* by this time? Lay low, Rob Felix, till I brung back yer hoss. Away, Vitee! away to Baker's Crik."

"It's Red Kelly's scalpers," called out the boy, as the two steeds, feeling the spur, struck into a headlong run. "Baker's Creek! and five miles away! Hume and Duffy brought to bay by Kelly's incarnate fiends"—how the thought flashed along the nerves of the scouts. They did not pause to question what they might or could do against such odds, but the call had come for help, and brave hearts responded.

"Travil! travil!" yelled Champ, nearly standing upright in his stirrups, his long, lank body thrown forward upon the shoulders of his horse, as he strained ears and eyes for some signal from the far-away contest. Half the distance passed, and then there sounded the rumble of a party of horsemen in front of them.

"God! is it all over?" aspirated Champ, in a broken voice, as he still thundered onward. No; hear that wild, fierce, quivering yell—different tones wound and twisted together and prolonged until there was something more fearful about it than there would be in the angry roar of the lion. Up and down the swells and rises, Champ's voice answered that Plutonian call. And Vitee aspirated, "The Regulars! thank God, the Regulars!" Straight ahead, from two different directions, dashed the scouts and the Regulars, and they met, as it were, at the small end of the V.

"Come with us," called Champ, now for the first time reconciling himself to sit back upon the saddle. "Come with us to Baker's Creek; they've got Griff and Duffy in er trap."

"We're after Red Kelly," returned Joe Emmet; "but close up, men, and follow."

"It's Red Kelly as hes holed 'em," called back the scout; and again that wild, defying yell, known on the border as Joe Emmet's bugle, shot over the plains in a mad, chilling echo.

"Baker's Creek" was the watchword, as Champ reined in front to lead them; and the old hero now threw his whole soul into his paces. He again arose in his stirrups in an attitude, as it seemed, ready to spring over the head of his steed in an instant.

A little time, a few moments, now would decide the matter at the creek. No other word was spoken. The moon shone upon a small squadron of men rushing abreast in impetuous haste, and at last Baker's Creek is before them, and each eye sees an ominous party of men drawn in solid square, but little ways in front of them. Is the renegade Kelly at last preparing to enact the *role* of manly warfare, and meet his opponents in open fight? Ah, no; for as the Regulars again emit that inimitable cry, the group suddenly flies into fragments, and expose two huge, pendulum-like figures swaying from a horizontal limb of the gigantic dead stub. With the shriek of a panther Champ dashed up.

"Drive under, drive under, Vitee, an' cut down ther body nighest yer;" and springing upright on the back of his horse, holding hard upon the bridle with his teeth, Champ lifted up the nearest body under his left arm, and striking upward with his long knife he severed the rope the fraction of an inch above the hanged man's head, while Vitee and another fellow did the same for the other victim. Then the gaunt figure of the scout stooped and let slide the limp body upon the turf, with this anguished exclamation:

"Vitee, will you keep two or three boys here, an' do what yer ken fur ther poor fellars bodies, fur as God's my helper, this night's work ain't dun."

Joe Emmet had not been idle. By a wave of his hand, plainly seen in the moonlight, he had swung off his right wing of regulars before that last yell apprised the border fiends of the proximity of their sworn foes, and when, for some unaccountable reason, the renegades put spurs in flight, they met a confusing and disastrous cross-fire. The borderers closed up, and the work was hot and heavy; but outside of these hand-to-hand combatants, one man thinking discretion the better part of valor, endeavored to desert his companions, but had not advanced an hundred yards beyond the horrible melee when he became conscious of pursuit.

The moon dipping westward washed her face of every cloud, and lighted the scene with her cool and silvery splendor.

The animals ridden by the pursued and the pursuer seemed to be well matched in limb and wind, neither apparently gaining upon the other. At the pommel of the saddle, Champ had noticed the coiled lariat with which no doubt Rob Felix had been practicing. He knew that he could not use it; he knew that he had never practiced throwing the lasso since he rode and scouted in Texas a full score of years before. But the temptation was such that he lifted the coil and began whirling it above his head. The long-limbed beast took the cue, and where his gait was tremendous before it was now irresistible. The wind rushed squealing by, and into the horseman's ears, and his sober, closely fitting, much vaunted "shugar lofe" lifted and spun away like a feather.

Champ, inspired by this strange and novel spur, continued to circle his arm above his head until the black stallion had shortened the distance between himself and the object which his brute instinct and training had taught him was to be captured, until the two men were within bullet range. The moonbeams glistened down upon the scout's straggling gray hair, upon his strong, sinewy arms, and the shining barrel of his rifle.

A long, forked blaze of fire burst from the weapon, and if the shot in a measure was fired at random, justice guided it.

The renegade's right arm was shattered below the elbow.

His horse, frightened by the sudden report, and the howl of his rider, shied a little sidewise, and took the contents of Champ's other barrel just behind the fore shoulder. He stumbled upon his knees, and threw his master, and Champ's iron foot was on his breast in an instant.

"I hev yer, I hev yer, at larst;" hissed the hero, throwing himself forcibly upon the wounded miscreant. "No yer needn't fiddle yer left arm, I know yer as good at a shot, or at knifin', with yer left hand as ther most most er people air with ther right; but time is no more for you, Red Kelly, no more for you."

"How in the fiend's name, old crane, do you know that I *am* Red Kelly?"

"Hasn't I heerd that guttural voice ev yourn—jist as it growled deep in yer throat a minute ago—when yer was a most reddy ter knife ther man yer happened ter hev under yer knee at ther time? And don't I know this powerful left hand that I've j'est tuk ther precaution ter pinion'—yer don't deny it?"

"Always answer up to roll-call, old crane."

"Never agin here, arter ter night, Red Kelly."

"What in the fiend, old man, do you think that you are going to do?"

There certainly was a hollow tone to his voice.

"Get up, an' I'll tell yer. 'Taint no use ter be contrary. Yer may mount on front er me, or—I shall hitch yer, by means ov this lar'at, ter ther beasts' heels, and drag yer back."

"Back where?"

"Where the blood of old Ben Bradford calls for vengeance."

"Never!"

"But go yer will; an' I gin yer the choice, will yer locomote on hossback, or try er drag?"

After a moments' hesitation Kelly was helped upon the back of Champ's horse, that worthy hero having seen first that the pinioned arm was safe; for Kelly was known to have a score of tricks that might outwit the sharpest guardian.

Champ mounted behind him, and put the horse into a good pace, heading him back again to Baker's Creek.

"You don't say what you calculate to do with me, Champ?" growled the desperado, the pain of whose wounds must have been agonizing.

"Yer know what yer did fur ther two poor fellars back thar?"

"Yes, I reckon, curse 'em! I'll learn 'em what overtakes the bloodhounds of the law."

"Wall, yer got ter go ther same way, Red Kelly; ther same, I swar it."

The renegade made an ineffectual struggle. He cast his eyes on every side. It was evident that he expected the very fellows whom he had wantonly deserted, would reorganize for his rescue. But no help came. Fate was as merciless as *he* had just been to the two men whom he had helped to execute.

The fight was over when the scout and his prisoner came near Ben Bradford's cabin. The regulars had killed and wounded several of the border miscreants, and had taken several prisoners.

The sinking moonbeams showed Champ's visage set in solemn, colorless rigidity.

"Who've ye got, Champ?" called out several of Emmet's volunteers, as the old veteran rode into their midst.

"It's Red Kelly, boys," he returned, "an' I want yer ter bear a hand here, an' tie a noose in this rope."

The wretch gave an involuntary, gurgling gasp, as ready forms, with the cry, "Up with Kelly! up with Red Kelly!" sprang forward to do the scout's bidding.

"It sha'n't be sed that I gin yer no chance, Kelly—ef yer ken right the wronged in enny way—ef—"

"Stop yer preaching, old man—it's lost, every word."

"Fix the rope;" was the solemn order.

In a few moments the slip-noose was adjusted, the coil of rope tossed over the same dead limb which scarcely an hour before had held up the two victims of brutal outrage.

"Here's ther atonemunt for poor murdered Ben," called out the avenger. "Boys, do yer work faithful."

No need to give this injunction. Hardly a man of those remaining near but had received a heart-wound from this hitherto invincible demon, and therefore hate and justice windlassed up the renegade, who to the last moment looked for succor from his allies. But there comes a time to the lawless and wicked when their staunchest followers withdraw, and outraged justice avenges the wronged and oppressed. That time had come for Red Kelly. No reprieve, no pardon for him.

An hour later the gaunt form kneeling beside Griff's inanimate figure, who had given over the shadow of hope, although he had discovered at the first that the poor fellow's neck was not broken, gave a sudden leap and uttered an exclamation of joy.

"Here, here, Vitee, draw up his arms and lower them—up and down—so, while I press ther lungs ter work, for as God is maroiful, thar's signs of life; an' if we persist in our efforts, we shall find that Griff's a thousand times better nor a dead man yet."

Some faint, struggling symptoms of life had been discerned, and those competent for the work knelt beside him, and used every endeavor to restore suspended animation.

At last they were successful; and ere the gray of the new day had spread far up the eastern sky, Hume's distorted features had assumed their natural color and shape, and he breathed with faint and jerking motion, but with sufficient regularity to insure recovery.

Duffy's neck had been broken by the suddenness with which his body had been drawn up, and so life with him was hopelessly extinct. They buried him beside Ben Bradford at Baker's Creek.

"Two as honest fellars," said Champ, "ez ever laid alongside with thar feet t'wards sundown. An', boys, when I took ther trail of ther miscreants as murdered honest old Ben, I couldn't help er casting my eye ter that very limb on ther stub yender, an' thinks I, mebby he—Red Kelly—'ll tick off his time inter eternity from that ar very dead limb. He *hes*, boys, he hes; an' he's gone whar, ef he takes enny cumfort at all, Ben's kind soul will hev ter brung ther drop er watter ter cool his tongue. It's orful, but it's just."

"Shall we leave the meat there, Champ?" was the recklessly suggestive question.

"No, no, cut it down, whar ther buzzards ken hev a sociable time. He shell never hev Christian burial—*never*."

The body fell with a thud to the earth, and Champ sprang back with a horrified howl, for the protruding tongue of the fiendish renegade actually did lap the earth where his victim's blood was spilled.

"He died game, though," said Vitee.

"He was let ter die quicker nor he would ef he'd showed ther white fether," returned the scout. "He as never showed marcy was better off in not askin' it."

"It's time to move back," suggested one of the party.

"Not yet, not yet; I want Griff's eyes wide open before we leave ther carcass. Hez enny body got any water in ther canteen? I've got ther valley of a thimbleful ov whisky in mine, but he can't swaller it raw; his neck ain't over ther twist enough for that."

A man passed his canteen.

"Nearly all out," said he.

"Two spoonfuls," returned Champ, shaking it; "'nuff, 'nuff. Jest pour it inter mine with ther whisky; an' now git yer knife atween his jaws—easy. That's it. Griff must hev a heap ter live for ef he thanks us fellers fur gettin' on him back, when he war clar chuck gone. Howsomdever, we'll resk it."

It was broad daylight and hard upon sunrise when Griff's senses, one after the other, came straggling back to his possession. And it took several persons to explain to him the whys and wherefores of his surroundings.

"I hain't started ther cavalcade homewards yet, fur I wanted yer to see Red Kelly; and yer remember what I tole yer about ther mark that his left hand would make ef 'twas bloody and was put upon ther breast ov er man to hold him down."

Griff came struggling to his feet, but instantly fell back.

"Don't hurry," says Champ, "thar's plenty ov time, an' I want yer ter understand all about it."

A half hour more passed, and with occasional doses of Champ's adulterated whisky, young Hume had so far recovered that he could walk with but little aid.

"A minute longer, Griff, an' it would ev been a useless rescue."

Hume carried his hand involuntarily to his throat and gasped.

"It's a dreadful sensation—blue, green and yellow bubbles rising out of nothingness, drifting and bursting before the eyes, and a horrible frying sound in the ears. Ugh! it makes me shudder."

"In course, seein' circulation ain't harf restored yet; but look at this hand," turning this member of Red Kelly's dead body over with his toe. "Is it ennything like?"

"Heaven be merciful!" responded Griff, falling rather than dropping upon his knees to examine it.

There was the crooked and shrivelled finger next to the little finger, and bent outward in snob a manner as to form a sort of letter X with its outside neighbor, the deformed one projecting for the length of half an inch beyond the outline of the hand.

"This is the form of the mark left upon De Lancy's breast," was Griff's solemn affirmation.

"I knew it."

"But how—"

"Don't confuse yerself yet—wait till yer ken put this an' that tergether."

"I wish Keith were here."

"It don't marter; yer affydavy is er nuff. Ye'll know more when yer ken think."

"And this is the end of Red Kelly," remarked Hume in a meditative and confused tone.

"Yas," responded the scout, "an' two hours ago we war all'quizin' in ther same strain over yer unresponsin' body. Wall, I've lived fur suthin' ef I've seed the larst ov this border desperado. Ther brunette don't compare with him as he waz, fur he had a huge top brain—but thar he iz, ez harmless now ax ther best on us, bless God! an' so long ez we've got ther morgage off yer win'pipe we'll go off and let ther bashful buzzards gather. I knew 'twould cum ter this sum time. Ther whole border is ter rise up an' call us blessed."

On the way back to the settlement Griff's mental equilibrium was so far restored, that he was able to relate that he had been down nearly to the Texas border on government business, besides having turned aside to interview Wakefield, De Lancy's second partner, in hopes of finding some clue there that would lead to the arrest of the murderer.

On his return, accompanied by Duffy, the scout and guide, they fell into an ambush; and running for their lives, at last reached the cabin at Baker's Creek. Their defence proved insufficient; the door was burst in and they were captured, and no quarter was shown them, as we have seen.

CHAPTER XXI.

Just outside, to the southward of the city of T——, are the ruins of an old fortification. It has been left as a sort of landmark to show the stretching forth of civilization upon one time savage ground. The land upon which the structure was reared had been purchased, with much that surrounded it, and was held by one of those men who place personal interest far in advance of public good; and therefore he retained a hold upon the valuable tract, awaiting a future greater rise in price, albeit he had already been offered quite fabulous sums for it for building purposes.

So around the falling walls was a wide circumference of uninhabited space.

Within the stockade one of the barracks buildings, in a good degree of preservation, still remained.

Rumors were rife among gossipping servants that the dead and gone soldiers held reunions—their shades coming to celebrate anniversaries of by-gone days in camp, or bivouac. They hinted of glimmering lights, like moonbeams reflected in water; of shadowy forms stalking about the barrack yards.

Be this as it may, the building yet remaining in a decent degree of preservation, had underneath it a vault, formerly used as a powder-magazine; access being had to its underground chamber from above by means of a heavy trap door.

Into these subterranean chambers it is our pleasure—with or without permission—to enter.

We naturally start back astounded to find these gloomy vaults inhabited, not by the fabled vampyres and bats ascribed to such places, for in the farther apartment we notice reclining upon a barbarously rough couch the outline of a human figure; but whether dead, sleeping, or waking, we cannot, at first, determine. An utter, oppressive stillness reigned. One could fancy that he heard the "throb-throb, throb-throb" of a frightened, human heart.

Suddenly—so suddenly as to—if you please—startle us into an exclamation of dismay, a head is raised from the rough pillow and propped up by a thin, transparent hand. And such a wild, haggard face, such burning eyes, and such a hopeless expression of the lips—it is dreadful to behold.

She seems to listen intently, and the lamp-light shows her face still more ghastly than at first. The appointments of her room are dark and plain. The cleated plank door is guiltless of lock or bolt on the inside, but is now barricaded with the rough, black table and chair. The least real, or imaginary sound, seems to craze with fear the listening occupant of this underground den. The sudden ticking of insects in the crevices, the sigh of a passing breeze, brings her hands together in an agonized clasp. Blotches of scarlet flame out into her sunken cheeks, for she is sure that she hears deep and suppressed breathing outside the heavy door. Shall she spring to her feet, or remain as she is. Her deathly weakness favors her remaining quiet, and she falls back stiffly and numb upon the couch.

Without, the night lies soft and sweet upon the world. On every hand altars of worship send up from earth to its Creator homage. Incense offerings from the flowers, wave-offerings from the trees; and a young moon pouring a subdued light over creation from her slender horn, while the stars, Heavenly sentinels of the sky, cross each other on their appointed rounds, swinging up, or swinging down, according to their mission.

How strange it is that wrong and crime can stalk boldly under these holy orbs, and not be smitten of repentance and shame.

The haggard captive in the underground apartment, beheld at last what she had expected—the slow sliding back of her feeble barricade; and the awful visage of a gigantic negro gradually protrude within the opening.

She did not cry out, although the movements of her jailor were unusual and terrifying. She remained frozen to her couch, while he cautiously pushed away the table from the door and held back his own heavy breathing to ascertain if she slept. The opening was gradually widened, and ere long a hideous wretch dropped upon hands and knees and advanced into the room. She could but conjecture what it meant even before the pushing forward of his huge black hand showed a slender, blue bar where the lamp-light struck upon the glittering blade of a knife. Every action meant murder; and he thought that he was stealing upon a sleeping victim. Sight and senses failed her for an instant, while the black monster slowly and cautiously advanced; but with a mighty effort of the will she recalled her wandering faculties.

Oh, if she only had some weapon—a knife, anything to defend herself with; but there was absolutely nothing; and still that hideous, heavily-breathing fiend crept forward. Nearer the couch, and nearer yet, and he pauses and shuffles his feet a little more under him, and she knows that, panther-like, he is preparing to spring.

There is but one chance for her that she can conceive of. She makes a sudden leap upon the floor directly before him, having cast her hopeless eyes toward the heavy plank door through which there is no hope of escape, and seizing upon the heavy hard-wood stool, she springs back against the wall behind the couch, having but small hope, with such an inefficient defence. Her movement astonished the ebon Hercules to that extent that he did not put out his tigerish paw in time to seize her, and now stood eyeing her with a demoniac glance.

Nothing is heard in that underground prison but the heavy breathing of the assassin and the quivering gasps of the victim. With his eye glittering as a serpent's, with stiff, cautious movements, the negro makes ready for the awful deed. He brings from behind his back the huge hand that holds the knife. He knows that he can easily overpower his victim, so why does he make this stealthy approach?

She can endure the agony no longer. A death-sweat has oozed out along her marble forehead, and stands in beads upon her ashy lip. Gathering all her vitality—all her remaining strength, she utters so wild and long, and piercing a shriek, that its echo zigzags along her own brain; and yet holding the oaken stool poised for a down-sweeping blow, she utters another quivering scream, and the black criminal makes a heavy plunge toward her in order to speedily accomplish his purpose.

We will not say that by chance—for events occur through no such agency—but by an especial Providence, a man had been wandering softly about the ruined fortification ever since the early twilight. He wore a coat of unbecoming pattern, and a badly jammed hat; carried in his hand a curious and clumsy cane. His was no aimless purpose, else he had not so cautiously drawn himself behind a screening projection, and allowed the hours to go by in patient silence.

The first shriek of the woman brought him into view, life-size. The second one had hardly pierced the night air, when assassin and victim were alike astounded by the bursting in of the door with its inefficient props, and a man unexpectedly appeared on the scene.

His heavy-headed cane described a sudden half-circle and descended with a thud upon the woolly head of the black ruffian.

A strange, terrible gurgling rattle was heard in the woman's throat and she fell across the couch.

This new comer upon the scene was well prepared for the emergency. He instantly produced a pair of hand-cuffs, and the stunned criminal was rolled over, while his wrists were united on his back, and a piece of cord held his ankles close companions. The man then raised the apparently lifeless woman and bore her out of the room, being careful to use the ponderous lock on the outside of the door, also two heavy bolts, to keep the ruffian safe until his return.

The people of the house where he carried her, pronounced the woman dead, so deathlike was her swoon; meanwhile, her rescuer had obtained the proper authorities and brought the negro ruffian up to lodge in the prison. To all questioning the negro remained deaf; even remote hints at Judge Lynch failed to affect his nerves. It is just possible that he reasoned, that while silence *might* seal his fate, confession *would* do so, and, therefore, he chose the wiser course.

CHAPTER XXII.

There was an unusual earnestness in the greeting which passed between Keith and Griff after the latter's miraculous escape from an untimely end.

"And she calls for Griffith Hume;" was the way that the Chief of Police concluded his narrative of his rescue of the woman at the old fort.

"Who is she?"

"I'll be hanged if I know. It seems to me, too, that I have seen her before; but she lays there at Dyricks, where I conveyed her, in a half-unconscious state; and the physician is doubtful whether she ever recovers her mental faculties. We are having all that we can do to prevent the negro from being lynched. He will not answer one question as yet—and we want to get at the facts of the case from one or the other, if possible."

"How did you chance to be in that unfrequented locality, Keith, just at that fortunate time?"

"I had been hovering around there for several days, or nights, rather—for the stories told about the old barracks yard being haunted had awakened my suspicions that all was not right. At the time, I was trying to hunt up a gang of counterfeiters; and I am now of the opinion that a worse nest than that must have had headquarters there."

"She has told you nothing?"

"Absolutely nothing; only 'Bring me Griffith Hume,' she has said, during her conscious periods."

"Well, I will go there directly—this very morning. Nothing urgent prevents me."

Mrs. Dyricks received them politely, and soon returned from the invalid's apartment, and informed the visitors that the lady seemed calmer and better, and would see Mr. Hume immediately.

She was propped up in an easy-chair, and tried to arise on his entrance, but could only extend a thin, white, trembling hand.

"Griff!"

Only the rich voice to ensure recognition.

"Is it possible that I behold Isabel Poinson?" he exclaimed.

"What there is left of me;" was the trembling response.

"My dear girl, what has happened to you?" he questioned, sitting near her, and gazing with emotions of horror, upon her wasted figure.

"The—the boy—Griff?" and her weak bosom fluttered like a bird, as she asked the question.

"Was returned well and happy, months ago, to the care of Mrs. Meige."

"By whom?"

"Champ was the rescuer."

"Oh, thank God!" she ejaculated with quivering tones. "And what is it that I hear talked over among the soldiers here. Is Red Kelly dead?"

"He is."

"Are you sure, Griff?"

"Yes, I am."

"Oh, swear to me that he is dead."

"I saw him myself, lying cold in death."

She clasped her hands convulsively, her eyes rolled upward, an ashy color crept across her lip, and for a few moments she seemed to be dying. Then she suddenly rallied, while a scarlet tinge swept across her wasted features.

"Then I can live. Oh, Griff."

He did not then understand.

"Pass me that glass of wine, please. Thank you. *You*, to a certain extent, have had faith in me, Griff. You shall have my confidence. If Red Kelly is dead, your search after Dick De Lancy's murderer is ended."

"Ah? Champ and myself had so concluded."

"By what system of arguing?"

"By the bloody mark upon the poor fellow's bosom. The mark showed a sort of X made by a misshapen finger lapping across the little finger."

"Yes; it was his hand, which he always carried half doubled up, and it would pas unnoticed by a casual observer."

"You knew the assassin all the time?"

She nodded, weakly.

"And yet would not betray him?" Griff's tones were reproachful.

"I could not—I did not dare to do so."

"Miss Poinson!"

"He was my divorced husband—the father of my child."

"Impossible!"

She briefly ran over what the reader has known ever since her confidential disclosures to De Lancy.

Her listener was amazed.

"Could not Dick have been placed on his guard?"

"I cautioned him," she replied. "I told him what a fiend Ellis K. Perley was, as I had learned to my cost; but I did not know then that he was Red Kelly, although I believed him capable of enacting the *role* of Satan with profound success. I charged De Lancy to beware; I told him the man could don any disguise with perfect success; but, oh, Heavenly Father, I did not dream—" She paused, shuddering.

"What? Dream what?" he prompted.

"That he went and came over the States—now here, now there. I did not dream that E. K. Perley—that 'Red Kelly'—came west from New York with you as—as a partner of De Lancy."

"God of the universe!" exclaimed Griff, recollecting what Keith had said about supping with the desperado in a sort of "hail-fellow, well-met" cordiality.

"Came from New York with us?"

"As Flamm, one of the partners."

"Astounding!"

"But too true."

"You had not known Dick then?"

"No; but that mattered little, he was in quest of prey all the same."

"But this story taxes credulity."

"Yes. Yet see if there are no circumstances to substantiate my statement."

Griff remembered the underground tunnel, and Flamm's magnanimity over the defaulted money which *he* had stolen himself. Yes; a tide of circumstances going to confirm Miss Poinson's story rushed into his mind.

"And you did not suspect Flamm?"

"No; I instinctively shrank from the man, but his black wig and false black whiskers and mustache and eyebrows changed him beyond recognition. As Flamm, he decoyed me into the street, pretending that business called him to the office. I was seized and stifled, and conveyed to the old fort, where ever since I have had that hideous negro for my jailer. He boasted—the double-dyed villain—of his exploits as Red Kelly; laughed at himself as Flamm; recounted with gusto his murder of De Lancy, and swore to have your life and that of Champ and Vitee, who were striving to recover my boy. I persistently defied him, even when I was dying with anguish at the probable fate of my child, and at the thought of the horrible impressions which my absence might leave on your mind. He took a fearful oath that I should never leave my prison alive, asserting, with terrible humor, that if anything *did* interfere with his windpipe, Jocko, the negro, was to put me out of existence, and leave the country. I did not know whether anything had happened to Red Kelly, when Jocko attempted to murder me, or whether he was weary of being my jailer. I don't think Keith knew who I was when he rescued me."

"He does not know now."

"No wonder. I am sadly changed. Only for the sake of my boy, I should have yielded to the horrors of my surroundings and gone mad. Oh, those long, long months of imprisonment—shall I ever lose their horror? and that dread of being murdered in my sleep—God have mercy upon my brain!"

"Calm yourself, Miss Poinson," returned Griff, soothingly; "your arch-enemy is where the wicked cease *from* troubling."

The thought soothed her, and an hour later, when he left her, she was calm, and once a wan smile had flitted across her face.

After this, Miss Poinson rallied, and recovered rapidly. In less than two weeks, pale as a lily still, and trembling at any unusual sound, she was yet able, however, to ride out to the fort, and embraced her child with all a mother's rapture.

* * * * *

A brief glimpse at passing events some months after Red Kelly's death will leave the reader's mind tranquil in regard to our friends. Wakefield, the second partner, quartered upon an agency in New Mexico, when interviewed and closely cross-examined, proved that he knew nothing of Flamm's *aliases*, and was as much horrified at his atrocious criminality as the world in general.

Dempster did not find those blue spectacles, but he procured a box of fine specimens of minerals, with which he re-

turned east, happy to carry home his scalp unmolested.

Vitee, the Indian Tamer, with his handsome and heroic wife, occupy a station on the outermost bounds of civilization: and Champ's "slim, rovin' figger" still locomotes the plains on the trail of the free-riders, or stands wide and thin upon the hills when the twilight shows the savage beacon-fires signalling across the flats.

Griff, casting aside the spell of Miss Poinson's fascinations, bravely yielded the ground to Colonel Dewey, and the gallant soldier was only too happy in giving her boy a name. His mansion was once more jubilant with rich, childish laughter; and she, thankful that his heart lies deep, down an unreadable depth in her own bosom, thinks of her beautiful boy, and her lovely face is glorious in its beauty, and people persist in envying the colonel and "sweet Isabel."

Keith had said at the time of Dewey's marriage, giving Griff a little ecstatic hug about the shoulders:

"By Jove! I'm glad it's over so. I expected it would be *you*, and I can't root out my prejudice."

Griff absently dropped his fingers upon the table, perhaps thinking to drum "The Girl I Left Behind Me," or else to beat the time of

"'Twas ever thus from childhood's hour,
I've seen my fondest hopes decay."

And Chief-of-Police, Ambrose Keith, soliloquized:

"Why, bless Heaven, the lad is heart-whole, after all."

What a little way the best of us can dive beneath the surface. It is well.

THE END.

THE WHITE LADY;

OR,

The Brierton Mystery.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A SUDDEN DEPARTURE.

Major Chester had spoken of some books he wished Madeleine to read, and she had forgotten the circumstance, until, as she was strolling in the garden in the cool twilight, she heard a step on the gravel walk, and looking up, saw his tall figure standing partly between her and the sky.

Madeleine felt herself blush vividly, she could not tell why, as she advanced to meet him.

"You are alone!" he said, and the inflection of his voice showed that he was not exactly displeased at the circumstance.

"Papa is gone to town."

"Indeed! So suddenly! When did he leave?"

"About an hour after you went away this afternoon."

"He had urgent business, I suppose?"

It never struck Madeleine that he was questioning her rather more closely than the occasion required, as she answered, simply, "No; it was not business. It was just a fancy of papa's, at the moment, to treat himself to a little change, and I could not persuade him to wait until to-morrow."

"I wonder he didn't take you with him."

"I wonder, too. But dare say he had some good reason for not doing so."

"I dare say he had," replied Major Chester, in a tone of grave significance, quite thrown away on his incautious companion.

"There never was any one half so wise as papa," his daughter said, enthusiastically; "and it is such a comfort. I have only to do as he tells me, to feel sure that I am doing right."

Major Chester felt like a traitor, as he listened to those praises, and hastened to turn the subject by asking Madeleine if she had forgiven him yet.

"Was I so very severe, then?" Madeleine asked, with a charming blush and smile.

"So severe, that I had made up my mind that you would reject my little peace-offering rancorously."

"I wonder you had the courage to bring it then."

"Yes, I wonder I had; but nothing venture, nothing have. It was worth while running any risk to obtain a word of pardon from your lips."

"You are treading on forbidden ground."

"Unconsciously, then, I do assure you. I see that I must 'speak by the card' when I am with you."

In spite of himself, his voice was soft, almost tender. The worst thing he could do was to fall in love with Madeleine; and yet, when he stopped to think, he knew that he was drifting fast that way.

To a world-tried man like Major Chester the charm of her perfect simplicity and truth was irresistible; and he had a passionate yearning, as she stood there, to gather the slight little figure into his strong arms, and set the seal of his kiss on her sweet, red lips.

Her color kept coming and going so very prettily, flooding her soft, sensitive face one moment, to leave it quite pale the next; and her eyes, pencilled all round by the strong black lashes, looked like stars.

But he must not love her. How could he perform the task he had set himself if he surrendered to Madeleine? He must keep his eyes off her beauty, and divert his mind from dwelling on her perfections, or throw down his arms at his friend's feet, and swear that the old Squire was a saint.

And he was not so much in love as all this, at present. Only the position was a dangerous one, he felt; and the sooner he took himself off, the better, if he was to keep to his good resolutions. Perhaps he was all the more determined now that he had feared to be weak.

Suddenly assuming a more formal tone, he handed Madeleine the book he had brought her, and wishing her good-evening, almost abruptly walked away.

"I must have offended him," Madeleine thought; "I never saw him like this before. I am sorry, too, because he is so kind; but I suppose it can't be helped."

She did not care to confess, even to herself, how much she regretted the change.

Major Chester strode back to his friend, and surprised him by shouting almost before he could get into the room. "Upon my word, Paul, you will have a good deal to answer for! You scared Mr. de Lacy so thoroughly with your ghost-stories, that he has been obliged to leave immediately for change of air."

"You are joking, surely."

"Upon my word, I am not. And what is more, I am off, too."

"It seems as if I had scared you as well."

But Major Chester had no time to answer, evidently. He ran up-stairs three steps together, and Captain Vane could hear him overhead, pulling open drawers: then he came down again, with a knapsack swung across his shoulders, and put his head inside the door. "God bless you, old fellow; I'm off to Dixreuil," he said, and was gone.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TOO LATE.

When we consider how a mere word, carelessly spoken, or an accident too trivial to be noticed at the time, may alter our destiny, and even affect our lives, it seems wonderful that the great tide should roll even so smoothly as it does.

Farmer de Lacy had a confidential servant, called Jock, a sturdy countryman, whose only fault was that he loved a glass of beer.

This was a very venial error, you will say, and whilst rich men drink their wine, why shouldn't a poor man enjoy his beer? But then this little failing of Jock's robbed an old father of his darling, a child of its mother, and the world of a fair young presence.

On such small causes will great issues hang.

The old farmer sat up late on the evening of Wild Will's visit, writing to Polly. He begged her to come home, or, failing this, to make it possible for her own family to go to her without incurring the risk of encountering her husband, even by chance.

The old man tried to take a temperate tone, and yet his letter would have wrung poor Dolly's heart ruthlessly if she had ever been destined to see it.

When he had finished, with many a loving message, and prayer for their speedy reunion, he shut the letter away in his desk until the afternoon of the next day.

Then he sent for Jock.

"Now, look here," he said, showing him the letter; "I wouldn't have this lost for all the wealth of the Indies, ten times told."

"If you trust it to me, sir," Jock replied, with a consequential air, "it's sure to be all right. I can't answer for the lads; but I can answer for myself."

"That is just why I want you to go to the post."

Jock looked gratified at the selection, and faithfully promised his master that he should have no reason to regret his choice.

"You may go and ask for a glass of ale before you start."

"Thank you, sir," answered Jock, pleasantly; and putting the letter in the pocket of his trowsers, he made his bow, and walked out.

The farmer's ale was good old October ale, warm and strong; and the cook being an old friend of Jock's, took care that he had two glasses instead of one.

The consequence was, that when he found himself in the lanes presently, with the hot sun pouring down on his devoted head, he began to feel very drowsy indeed.

"There couldn't be any harm in taking a short nap," Jock said, within himself. "It wants three hours of post-time, and I'm sure not to sleep more than twenty minutes."

So Jock lay down in the hedge, tilted his hat over his eyes to keep out the sun, and was soon slumbering peacefully.

The sun had gone down behind the hill when he awoke—and on consulting his watch, he found that it was exactly six o'clock.

"Then the post has been gone this half-hour," he said, ruefully, within himself. "What will the master say?"

He turned on his heel, and slowly retraced his steps to the farm, wondering what excuse he should make for his negligence when Farmer de Lacy began to question him.

Then a demon crept into Jock's heart, warning him to conceal his error from the stern master, whom he feared as much as he loved.

"It can't signify about one day," he thought; "and it's no use having a fuss about nothing. I'll let the master think it is gone, and put it in the post to-morrow.

So that when Mr. de Lacy came out to make his usual rounds, and seeing Jock, asked if the letter had been posted, the man replied, "All right, sir," and congratulated himself upon not having told a direct lie.

For it was all right, he argued, since it had not been lost, and would certainly go to-morrow.

"But man proposes, and God disposes." It looked as if Fate were against him; for though he tried hard all day to get off to the post, every obstacle was put in his way.

At last, the stable clock struck six, and it was quite a relief to know that his struggles were ended for that day.

The next it was no better. Farmer de Lacy, consumed by his feverish anxiety and unrest, was extraordinarily active, and Jock could not have found the occasion he sought unless he were prepared to confess the truth. So the letter lay in his pocket, burning it, as it were, until he got home at night. Then he remembered that the fact of Dolly's having received it so late would be known, and criminate him in his master's eyes much more than if it never went at all, as its loss might then be attributed to the carelessness of the post-office officials; and so, watching that no one saw, Jock consigned it to the flames.

Farmer de Lacy grew intolerably anxious and painfully irritable as the days went by, and Dolly made no sign.

"I suppose I offended her speaking about her husband," was his thought; "but, in any case, she might have sent me a line, unless she is ill."

This suggestion quite overcame him.

"If she should be ill, in a foreign land, with only that worthless scoundrel beside her, it would break my heart."

But when the sixth morning came, bringing no letter still, the old man could no longer endure the disappointment and suspense.

"Pack up a few things, Emilia," he said to his second daughter, "and we'll go to Dolly. Carrie can keep house while we are gone."

Perhaps he meant to punish Carrie for her jealousy, by leaving her out; or understood that Dolly, in her trouble, would prefer to confide in the sister who had been most gentle to her in happier days. However this may be, he never accounted for the selection, and seemed to look upon it as the natural thing for Emilia to accompany him.

We may be sure that Jock felt very badly, when, as he took the reins from his master's hand at the station, the old man said, in a husky voice—

"There has never been any answer to the letter you posted, Jock; but I hope we shall soon bring Miss Dolly home."

Now that he could speak of her, it was "Miss Dolly;" it would have burnt his tongue to call her by any other name.

Jock looked after the farmer, and a confession trembled on the tip of his tongue. But whilst he was trying to brace his courage to face the storm that must necessarily ensue, the bell rang, the train came hissing into the station, and the old farmer and his daughter were bustled out of sight.

And so Jock drove soberly home, resolving that, whatever the consequences, he would, *for the future*, always tell the truth.

Things went smoothly enough for the two travellers as long as they were on English ground. But when they reached the other side of the Channel, it was quite a different thing.

The old farmer, who had never been abroad before in all his life, seemed to think that if people did not understand the language, they ought to understand him; and, in his misery and impatience, became furious at what he termed the stupidity of those about him.

They managed to reach Paris, however; but so late, that it was necessary to stay the night. At the hotel, which a fellow-traveller recommended, there was a waiter who "spiked Englesh," and certainly did murder it most cruelly.

But, with the help of Emilia's boarding-school French, they at last succeeded in making him comprehend that they wanted a carriage early the next morning to take them to Dixreuil, and, after this, the worst of their difficulties were over.

"I shall be glad enough when we get back home," the old farmer said, wearily, to his daughter, before he tried to snatch a little rest. "This is a confounded country for any Christian to come to. Why, they don't even understand the Queen's English!"

Emilia reasonably suggested that this was not so very wonderful, considering that they were all French; but her father would not admit the excuse.

"They ought to learn our language first," he said. "Just see what fools they look, stammering and hesitating as if they didn't know how to talk! Poor Dolly must have had a hard time of it amongst all these heathen folk!"

"Heathens, papa?"

"Well, don't they worship images, then?"

The old farmer was not in a fit state to be argued with, and so Emilia held her peace. But he had one cause to thank French stupidity, at any rate; he slept peacefully in consequence, if his rest was short.

The morning would bring him such sorrow as it had never entered into his heart to conceive, and these hours of suspense were, in comparison, of almost heavenly calm.

"I think Dolly will guess we are coming, don't you?" he kept saying to his daughter, as they drove out of Paris, and past fruitful vineyards, reddening in the morning sun. "She must be sure we would not let her suffer alone. I hope that fellow won't have returned; but there is no fear of that! He'll beg, borrow, or steal a little money, and then he'll have to stop and gamble it away before he thinks about his wife. Poor little Dolly! It was all her innocence and love, of course; but she did a very terrible thing."

"Perhaps she likes him still," Emilia ventured to say from her woman's nobler heart.

"Not she!" he answered, confidently. "With all her simplicity, Dolly doesn't want for sense."

They had taken the precaution of writing down the address on a slip of paper for the driver to consult, and presently he stopped in front of a very poor little place, where the old man could have wept with sorrow and passion to think that Dolly lived.

But Dolly was not there.

The woman of the house came out to see what they wanted, in a dingy dressing-gown; and when Emilia asked for Madame de Lacy, so softly that her father might not catch the obnoxious prefix, she shook her head, and went into a long voluble explanation they could not understand.

Seeing this, she pointed up-stairs, and then left them to their fate.

The old farmer went first, and, as there was only one door visible, he opened that, and stalked into the little bare chamber and gazed around.

"Dolly, my dear," he said, under his breath, "have you no welcome for your poor old father?"

The bed was in a kind of alcove, curtained off from the rest of the room, and by it an elderly woman was seated, rocking a young infant in her careful arms. Otherwise everything was so strangely cold and silent, so mysteriously calm, that the old man's voice sank involuntarily to a whisper as he repeated, "Dolly, my dear!"

No answer.

It was not like her to deny him even a word, and he began to tremble, without knowing why.

"What do you want?" the woman asked, rising as she spoke, and coming toward them.

"I want my child."

She understood it all then; and her fine old face grew whiter still as she pointed sternly toward the bed.

"She is asleep," he said.

"Yes; she is asleep," Manon replied, touching the lilies reverently with her tender hands. "Poor heart! she will never wake again!"

Even then he either could not, or would not, understand.

"I am come to take her home," he pursued, in a stifled voice. "It has been hard for her here all alone!"

"Nay," sighed Manon; "God has taken her home! Look for yourself; she is quite happy now!"

"She is dead!"

It was a cry, wild, bitter, despairing—like the cry of Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted because they were not.

What mattered it to him that he had two other daughters?—Dolly was dead.

He fell down beside the bed, groaning in his anguish, his dim eyes fixed on the calm, beautiful face of his dead child; and at this moment, when his reason was tottering, and horror overwhelmed his soul the little one in old Manon's arms gave a feeble cry.

He looked up then.

"Is that hers?" he said.

Manon bowed his head.

"Give it to me."

Manon hesitated for a moment, hardly knowing if he was fit to have such a frail little life in his power; but he stooped down and lifted it gently out of her arms, and then warned her off with a fierce gesture.

"How dare you keep what is mine? This was Dolly's last gift to me, and I'll make good my claim against the whole world."

And he rocked it to and fro on his heaving breast. The motion seemed to soothe the little one, and she fell asleep, with her cheek nestling as softly against his coat as if she understood the worth of the shelter she had gained.

Old Manon looked on through very tearful eyes.

When Emilia ventured to draw near presently, her father, who seemed to have forgotten her very existence until now, looked up, and said, harshly, "Don't cry, you poor coward—this is no time for tears! You see *his* work; now do yours!"

"What is mine?"

He moved impatiently.

"We are going to take Dolly home."

"Yes, father."

"Well, then, see to it."

Emilia began to realize at last what was expected of her, and motioned old Manon to follow her out.

It was very pitiful, very pathetic, to hear the old man strike up a nursery song presently in his quavering voice, as if he thought he was singing to the Dolly who was dead, rather than to the unconscious infant on his lap.

Manon was able and energetic, and a word was sufficient explanation of the service required at her hands.

"Get your father out of the room presently, and I will manage everything," she observed.

And then Emilia went back to her difficult task.

But it struck her to say, "The sun is shining so bright, papa, little Dolly ought to go for a walk."

"To be sure!" he said; "it will make her sleep, won't it? Come along."

When the peasants met the old man walking bare-headed, and singing discordantly to the little one he carried so tenderly, they believed him to be mad; but instead of mocking and jeering him, they only murmured, in passing, "Heaven pity you, my friend!" and courteously made room on the path.

When the proper time had gone by, Emilia said—

"Now, papa, I think little Dolly ought to go in. She will be quite hungry after her walk."

"Thank you for reminding me," he said. "We will go home."

He did not seem to miss the other Dolly when they reached the house. His whole thought and care were absorbed by the child, and Emilia could manage him easily enough.

In France, where people are buried so much sooner than they are with us, a coffin is quickly prepared, and poor Dolly was shut away in the darkness by this time, with only the lilies for company.

"Don't leave me yet," Emilia said, leaning on old Manon's strength, weakly; "I don't know what I shall do alone. If you would only come to England with us, you might return soon, and I should be so grateful. Finish the good work you have begun, kind Manon."

And because Emilia's voice, in its softened tone, was like poor little Dolly's, to whom Manon had clung strangely, the woman was melted.

"Let me go to my house first," she said; "and if it is possible to comply, I will not deny you."

It was odd that Manon, who professed to have no companion and no ties, must always go home before she could trust herself to any decision; but in less than half an hour she returned, in a clean cap, with a shawl over her arm, and proclaimed herself ready.

"Only that you and your father must take some food first, or you will be ill," she sensibly insisted. "You must not make my charge too serious, my dear. Meanwhile, I will go and pay the sub-lieutenant his four Napoleons, and give him a piece of my mind. Your poor sister told me everything, my dear; and if ever there was a miserable coward, it is that man. But it is no use talking about it;" and Manon brushed a tear out of her black eyes. "Can I trust you to see about everything whilst I am gone?"

"I will do whatever you tell me," Emilia said, only too thankful to have her on any terms; and when the old man was told that he must eat for little Dolly's sake, it never occurred to him to object.

Their homeward progress was rather slow, and there were often difficulties because of the poor dead girl; but old Manon, active and capable, kept all these out of sight, and scolded and coaxed, commanded and pleaded, all in a breath; and, thanks to her fine generalship, the goal was reached on the evening of the second day, and sadly and slowly they bore poor Dolly home through the darkening lanes. May be all her poor lilies were faded by this time, but their sweetness lingered about her still, and perhaps they were a comfort even yet in the darkness that no ray from this world would ever lighten again.

Poor Dolly's lips were sealed now, even against their kisses, and they might not even have the comfort of seeing her once more.

The coffin was carried up-stairs, and placed on her own bed; and then old Manon, waiting for no thanks, kissed the babe, as it lay in its grandfather's arms, and, unheeding all Emilia's prayers and remonstrances, went her way.

"I promised I would help bring my poor pretty home," she said; "and now my duty is done, and I must go."

Nothing moved her; and even whilst Emilia was still praying her to stay, she broke from the clinging arms, and was gone.

And how fared it with Jock, who believed that this was his work?

When he saw the mournful procession threading its way slowly and solemnly through the quiet lanes, he felt like a murderer of the blackest dye. He went and hid himself in the barn for a while, grovelling amidst the straw, and calling himself every bitter name he could find in his vocabulary.

"I killed her, pretty dear—I killed her!" he sobbed out; "and all along of my folly! And she was so good to me! I mind me, when I was ill, how she would bring me broth and jelly her very own self, and say so sweetly, 'Here, Jock, is something to make you well.' And then she would sit down and talk without any pride, and brighten up my room until it looked as fine as a palace. I shall never see her again—never—never! And it's me that have killed her! Oh, dear—oh, dear!"

And he fell to sobbing again, rocking himself violently to and fro.

At last it came into his head that the only comfort he could have was to tell the truth, and accept all the evils that would follow as the proper punishment and expiation.

For he never dreamt but that the old farmer would turn him ignominiously away, though he had worked for him over thirty years.

He stole into the kitchen, where his haggard face and wild eyes frightened the maids almost to death, and said, harshly, "I want the master."

"Nonsense!" one of them answered. "You are sure he won't see any one to-night; and I, for one, wouldn't ask him."

"Very well, then," Jock said; "just stand aside and let me pass, will you? I've got my duty to do, and it will be all the worse for you if you meddle, that's all."

"You'll just have the goodness to say that I didn't send you," she called after him.

"I'll just have the goodness to say what I've got to say!" he answered, sternly, and strode on.

When he reached the parlor, he could hear his master's voice, in a deep, monotonous kind of chant, and pushing open the door, he went in.

The old farmer was absorbed in tracing the features of that other Dolly, sleeping so calmly up-stairs, in the infant on his lap; and the firelight flickering across his rugged face, gave it such a harsh, troubled expression, that Jock's voice sank to a mere thread of sound, as he said, humbly, "Master!"

"Is that you, Jock?"

"Yes, master."

"Come here, then. You remember Miss Dolly when she was a babe—was she like this one?"

Jock could not have answered the question to save his life. Sinking on his knees, he cried out, with a stifled groan, "Don't, master; it was me who killed her!" And then, with wild haste, he told his tale in a passion of broken words.

The old farmer listened in silence, and his features worked convulsively, and he clenched his fist, and a savage glare came into his eyes.

Then, suddenly, all the fierceness died out of him, and he put his heavy hand on Jock's shoulder, saying, more gently than Jock had ever heard him speak in all the thirty years they had been together, "You didn't mean to hurt poor Dolly; for many's the time I have seen you carry her round the yard on your shoulder, and give her rides on one of the horses; and yours was one of the first names she learned to lisp. But the fellow who ruined her meaningly is the one I will never forgive, and if you see him skulking near this house, Jock, you loved Dolly, and you'll know what to do."

"Duck him," said the countryman, under his breath.

"Ay, ay!" echoed the old man; and, in another second, he seemed to have forgotten Jock's very presence, and so the other crept out as noiselessly as he could.

Cook was very civil to him now, arguing that he must indeed be a favorite if he were admitted to the master's presence at such a time, and wanted, badly, to draw him some ale, if only a glass, just to cheer him up; but Jock shook his head very decidedly indeed.

"I'll never so much as wet my lips with that cursed liquor again;" he said, emphatically; "it has cost me too much already."

And, to do him justice, he kept his word; only that earlier abstinence might have saved a precious young life.

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 3.)

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Passion lights a hazel eye,
Coldness lurks 'neath orbs of blue;
Gray's the color I adore;
My love, gray eyes have you.
The cheek that blushes love
Where'er your eyes see me,
That cheek is blonde, my love,
As English lassies' be.
The lips that swell to kiss
Beneath those eyes of gray,
Those lips are fresh, my love,
As flowers are in May.
The heart I call my own
You gave me long ago,
For dark gray eyes are true,
They love through weal or woe.
Those lips, that heart I'd trust
On earth, all else beyond,
Those lips have pledged their faith,
That heart will e'er be fond. E.

ONE RAINY DAY.

BY MILLIE W. CARPENTER.

A day of late, cold autumnal rains. Drip, drip, splash, splash against the window, vines creaking and clouds tossing, and great banks of mist lying on the hills.

That was outside. Inside, in the breakfast-room, there was plenty of light and warmth and color. A fire kindled of well-seasoned sticks of hard maple-wood crackled on the hearth, ladies moved about beaming in prettily got up morning dresses, the clock ticked off the few lingering minutes before eight, and an Angora cat snoozed comfortably on the rug.

This much by way of introduction. We had our growl out at the weather, and then we took our places at the table. It seemed a special Providence that we all had a letter that gloomy morning. I glanced over my customary note from Sister Martha filled with city gossip, and begging me to come down for Christmas; Bella Percy opened a sheet of commercial letter paper emitting a strong smell of Turkish tobacco, and then blushed all over rosy red as her cashmere wrapper, while Mrs. St. John, our hostess, took up a long, white official-looking envelope, covered with sprawling characters, and blotches of black ink and sealed with a big red seal.

I despise people who are always evolving things from the depths of their inner consciousness, but as soon as I saw that envelope I knew it held a mystery. I knew there was a secret within it, and that I should sooner or later be made acquainted with it. As I have no business of my own, I mind everybody else's business. Everybody comes to me with secrets, and my mind is an odd sort of receptacle for little bits and tag ends of other people's histories; their troubles and disappointments, and hopes and aims. A queer sort of bric-a-brac collection.

While we were chattering, Bella and I, exchanging bits of news, the door opened, and Margaret St. John came in. Immediately there fell upon us that sort of hushed, waiting silence which comes over a crowded church when the preacher walks up the aisle. We felt that vague, dim awe and reverence, which the coldest heart must ever feel when brought face to face with one whom God has chastened by drawing a veil over the light of the mind.

She came forward quietly and took the chair waiting for her. A faint flush tinged her thin cheek, and the soft shadow of sleep still lay in her large blue vacant eyes.

"You are late this morning, Margaret," said Mrs. St. John, folding her letter with an odd, quick look at her sister. "I am afraid the chocolate is cold. Bell, won't you please ring for Margey's toast."

"I know it! I was dreaming." Her voice had a certain lifelessness as if the spirit had faded out of it; but as she spoke her beautiful child-like face brightened, and the shadow of her lost reason seemed struggling in those dreadfully vacant eyes.

"You know I love to dream," she went on plaintively. "I am so happy then; but when I wake it all goes from me. I try to remember! oh, how I try to remember; but everything is dark."

She looked at Mrs. St. John piteously, and great tears rolled down her cheeks. It was the calm grief of a child, no passion, only a dull, perplexed sadness.

"I don't wonder you are out of spirits," said Bella, shivering. "It's a beastly day out."

"Bella!" said Mrs. St. John's reproving voice.

"Well, it is a nasty day! Rain, rain! What are we to do with ourselves? I wish Mr. St. John would come. The sight of a man would be a relief, even if he is one's host and married, middle-aged and a little bit fussy. It would break the everlasting sameness of things."

"I, too, wish he would come," said our hostess, sighing faintly, "I surely thought he would be at home this morning; I want him very much."

I knew the contents of that mysterious letter were weighing on her mind, making her wish for her husband's counsel; and I was prepared, when we rose from the table, for the little nod which bade me follow her out, ostensibly on her way to the nursery.

"What do you think?" she cried, grasping me by the arm as soon as we were alone in the hall. "Lewis Barrington has come back."

I stood in open-mouthed astonishment. This was the last thing I had expected.

"When! where!" I gasped, at length. "Where is he?"

"He is coming here! he is on the way now. That letter I got this morning was from him. It seems that Aunt Laura when she died left a legacy and a communication for him, a sealed letter with her lawyer. But nobody knew where Lewis was. You remember, when she died, how much talk there was. He was advertised and letters were sent everywhere; but he was not to be found."

"I remember!" I broke in. "People thought he was dead. There was a rumor, you know, that he had joined the expedition fitting out then for the Polar seas; and another that he had gone into the English service and was sent to India!"

"Yes, yes! I know!—well; there was no truth in any of the reports. Poor Lewis all this time was in Southern Mexico. Heaven knows what he was doing, half mad, fighting with his love and his despair, believing Margaret was false to him, and so trying to forget her, but only loving her all the more!

"I should like to read you his letter," she went on, with tears in her eyes; "but no! it is sacred! Well, at last he saw, by sheer accident, one of the newspaper advertisements. He wrote immediately to the lawyer, and got in answer Aunt Laura's letter. She confessed all her treachery; how she had made Margaret think that his desertion was voluntary. She told him of Margey's long illness and its dreadful consequences, her blighted mind—and ended by begging him to forgive her. You can guess *how* he forgives her," said Mrs. St. John, with a bitter laugh.

"I should think so!" I answered, indignantly. "And Margaret, poor, poor Margaret. How will she bear this? How will she meet him? Will she recognize him, now, after all these years of darkness? Will it be ill or well for her to see him now?"

"Ah! there is the trouble!" said Mrs. St. John, wringing her hands. "Poor Margaret! poor Margaret! It will break my heart to see them meet; they were so fond of each other once; she only lived for him—and now, to see her turn to him that vacant unresponsive face."

She dropped down on the floor and bent her face on her knees sobbing. I could hear the rain drip on the gravel walk below, and through the low sorrowful moan of the wind came the faint murmur of Margaret's monotonous, lifeless voice.

"But, who knows," broke out Mrs. St. John, in a brighter tone, "who can tell but that great good may come of it? When we were in Germany with her last year, the professor who examined her case, said that some quick, great shock of the mind might restore her. You know when she is asleep, when she dreams, the past all comes back to her; she is perfectly rational. I have sat by her bedside many times and heard her prattle with Aunt Laura, with Lewis, and everything is with her as it once was; she is our own darling, beautiful, bright Margaret again. But as soon as she wakes her mind is a blank, she can remember nothing. And yet there is a faint gleam of light behind the darkness. It breaks my heart to see her trying to recall the past. A faint mist seems to lie before her eyes, and yet, strain as she will, she cannot pierce through it.

"Marion! Marion!" called Margaret's plaintive voice; and at the sound we started.

"You go down," said my companion, hurriedly. "I must bathe my face and make myself presentable as a hostess. Oh, I wish St. John were here!"

Bella was in the window drumming, and Margaret was by the fire when I went down. She had some embroidery, with beads and bright-colored silks, and she asked pettishly for Marion to help her. I made some light excuse, and presently Mrs. St. John came in.

Tears came into my eyes as I watched the poor fair, patient head bent over the needles, trying so wistfully to comprehend the design. Her hands trembled with her eagerness; drops of perspiration stood on her forehead, and all the masses of her abundant fair curling hair fell down about her slender throat and shoulders.

Suddenly, while the two were thus engaged, a carriage dashed up in the rain and stopped at the gate. Mrs. St. John rose quickly and rang the bell.

"If any one asks to see Mr. St. John or myself," she said to the servant who answered, "take them at once to the library, where there is a fire. I will see them there."

During all this time Bella was exclaiming, wondering who it could be. Margaret did not look up, but sat busy with her silks and beads. We watched eagerly while a tall, dark, heavily-draped figure descended from the carriage and stood a moment in the rain, giving directions to the driver. There was a brief parley, and then the carriage whirled off up the street to the village inn, and the gentleman walked quickly up and rang the bell.

We heard his voice and the confusion in the hall, and then the sound of his footsteps walking quickly along the hall to the library. When the servant came to call Mrs. John, I saw that although she had been prepared for this meeting, and fighting for strength, her face was pale as death. As she rose she stopped, looked at me, then stooping, she kissed Margaret tenderly, passionately.

"God bless you, my darling!" she said, and then hurried from the room.

Bella Percy opened her gray eyes.

"Why, what does that mean? What is the matter with Marion?" she asked.

I pretended not to hear her. My nerves were strung up to a fearful tension; it seemed to me that I must shriek out in the awful stillness of the room. The clock ticked, the fire crackled, the cat rose lazily, scratching with sharp claws at the rug, and these two people, who had been so fond of each other once, the one so unconscious now both of her sorrow and her love, sat divided by a single door, oh! by far more than a single door, divided by a misfortune so awful, that though they were beneath the same roof, they were a million leagues of measured earth apart.

At last I heard footsteps coming. I grasped at the ribbon round my throat, which seemed to be choking me. The room whirled round and round with me, and then in the midst of the confusion the door opened and Mrs. St. John appeared, followed by a stranger.

I saw a tall, slight figure, clothed in black garments, a head covered with beautiful dark hair, just tinged with gray, and, shining out of a pale face, eyes that seemed to flash sparks of eager fire.

This was Lewis Barrington. He gave one quick glance round the room, saw nothing, took in nothing, but with a devouring, all-absorbing look, that one fair, drooping figure by the fire. He crossed over to it, and stooping, took the slim white hands in his.

"Margaret!" he said in a quick, clear voice, "Margaret, I have come for you at last. Have you no welcome for me?"

Oh! it was pitiful to seek the look in her eyes—the look that you see in an animal's sometimes—dumb, wild, blind, beseeching. Her lips quivered, her face flushed; her mind seemed to be groping, ranging like an imprisoned creature round and round a wall, trying to break through, but alas! how vainly, finding no crack, no crevice, not one gleam of light.

"Margaret!" he said in the same tone. "Margey, don't you remember?"

He was evidently putting a firm restraint on himself. I saw in his face the wild desire to clasp her in his arms, to weep out over her all his great passion of love, horror, grief, and hot, fierce resentment at the author of all this woe.

"I am tired!" breathed Margaret, plaintively. "Oh, how tired I am." Her head drooped wearily.

"My God!" said Lewis, dropping her hands. "This—this is what that woman did for pride and avarice."

Bella Percy leaned her head on my shoulder and sobbed aloud. "What does it mean! oh, what does it mean?" she cried.

"I am so tired," said Margaret, again. "What shall I do?"

She raised her eyes to Lewis, with a startled, beseeching look. It was pitiful, again, to witness the struggle of the poor, disappointed, feeble wits in their effort to regain something of the old brightness.

"You must forgive me," she said gently. "Sometime, I dare say, I shall remember, but now I am tired. I had a dream last night—somebody then called me 'Margey,'"—she stopped, and threw back her head. Her whole frame quivered in her agony.

It was the stillest room. The rain had ceased. Mrs. St. John stood with clasped hands, waiting. Lewis, with brightening eyes, beside her.

"Margey!" he said, in a low voice, almost a whisper.

"I have been trying to remember," said Margaret, now impatient for the first time. "There was a rainy day like this—oh, what is it?" and she put her hands to her head in pain.

GOOD TEMPLAR—"Very warm, coachman. Have a drink?"
COACHMAN—"Thank ye, sir. (*Drinks.*) Auch! Oh, murder! 'Am poisoned! What's that?"
GOOD TEMPLAR—"Only ginger-and-water!"

"A rainy day," said Lewis, slowly. "The streets were black with water, when two people walked together. The rain dripped from the eaves as we went down the walk,—it shone on your bright hair."

Margaret clasped her hands, trembling.

"Oh! such dim memories come and go—I wore a soft gray dress—soft and furry and warm—oh, it is going!"

"And a red cloak," went on Lewis, white as death. "You remember the pretty red Connemara cloak I brought you?—"

"Oh, where am I?"—she rose to her full height, with a terrible look of inquiry in her strained eyes. "Where is Aunt Laura? and Lewis, and where is Lewis?"

She turned, met his eyes, and then, with an awful sob of joy and remembered love, she flew to him.

"Lewis! Lewis! oh, I am awake at last. Kiss me—don't let me go! Oh, Lewis, the darkness is coming again!" and she fell back on his arm. She had fainted.

"Bring some wine!" said Mrs. St. John, and Bella flew to the sideboard. Margaret lay on the sofa, and we all bent over her with anxious hearts. At last she opened her eyes with a wistful natural gaze.

"I shall not dream again," she whispered. "Lewis, you are here."

He knelt by her, folding his arms about her.

"Oh, my little woman!—after all these years. And we shall never be separated again. If a lifetime of devotion can atone—"

But she broke in upon him with a kiss.

"A lifetime! ah, Lewis, this moment, this one moment, repays for all." And then followed a silence of thanksgiving.

"And now let us have some tea," said Marion; and the everyday life closed round us once more. Cups were set out. The fire was kindled, and Bella handed round the steaming, fragrant beverage. We all drank and chatted, but every few moments it seemed that we must stop and look at Margaret. She reassured us with a smile.

"I am so happy," she said, as if the words were a prayer.

The sun broke through the clouds at that moment, and a warm, red light streamed over her. A bird hopped to the window-sill, and began to sing.

"Let us, too, have some music," said Bella, going to the piano. And together we sang Mendelssohn's chorus from "St. Paul's" "How lovely are the messengers."

OUT OF THE WAVES.

BY JACK RATLIN.

A great lake, one of the chain of inland seas which part our country from the Canadian Dominion, lay shining under the rays of the descending sun. A little village nestled on the western shore of an ample bay studded with green islands; and on the point at the entrance to the bay, in the shade of the strange old-fashioned lighthouse, a woman stood looking dreamily out to sea, with that far-away, preoccupied expression which we see in those whose thoughts are not upon the scene before them.

A beautiful girl! Not the beauty of perfect regularity of feature, but the beauty of heart and mind. Such a face as we trust in, no matter what befalls, the face of a good and pure woman.

A quick step stirred the grass behind her, and another woman came out of the lighthouse and stood beside her. A dark, gypsy-looking creature, one who would not have looked so much out of place in the front of some great battle. A great soul, warped by passion and marred by pride.

"You are waiting for the Floating Feather," she said. "You are waiting for the last glimpse of your husband, Nellie Varden."

"For the *last* glimpse, Sarah," said the other, turning a quick glance upon the face of the speaker. "The last; what do you mean?"

"You will see him for the last time when the schooner leaves port," hissed Sarah Belton, a shade of terrible passion crossing her face. "Oh, you little know my heart. You little know that when you stole—but wait; wait until the schooner sails, and then I will tell you."

"There she comes," cried Nellie, taking out her handkerchief. "There is Archie on the lee rail."

There came a rushing sound as of the wings of a great bird, and a swift schooner, dashing the water from her sharp prow, came down the bay, heading out into the lake. On the rail, holding by the fore-rattlins, was a handsome young fellow, with curling, brown hair, and deep-blue eyes, who waved his hat and shouted a good-bye to Nellie, as the schooner passed; and the look of love in his face was reflected in that of his wife. And Sarah Belton set her teeth together with a clicking sound, while her hands opened and closed convulsively. Neither spoke for some moments, until the schooner was so far away that they could no longer see the figure of Walter Varden.

"Ah, cry away, you silly fool," hissed Sarah. "You will never see him again, until they carry his body up the beach to a grave on the hill yonder."

"Sarah!"

"Bah; why do you take the injured tone with me, when you know well that you robbed me of the love of Walter Varden? I have never forgotten, and I shall never forgive, until I see him dead and cold on the sandy shore.

"I never knew that you cared for him, Sarah," sobbed Nellie.

"False! You knew it—no one so well as you—that I worshipped the earth he trod, for his sake. But you came with your simpering doll's face and baby ways, and I was forgotten. He loved me well enough before. There; I have said my say, and shall speak no more—except this: I have had a vision of the coming time, and Walter Varden is to die before a week passes."

She turned and darted into the lighthouse unheeding the plaintive call of Nellie, and the young wife turned away with a deadly sickness at her heart. Sarah Belton had a strange reputation along that shore. Few could be found who did not believe that she was gifted beyond common mortals with the power to look into the future and delve out its secrets. Some said she inherited the gift from her gypsy mother; but be that as it may, Nellie respected this power in her. She knew that it was foolish; but woman is, after all, weak and credulous in regard to signs and warnings; and it was with a heavy heart that she went down the long street of the village to the pleasant little home which Walter had given her. A week passed, and the haunting fear still followed and made her wretched. Twice she met Sarah Belton, and each time she raised a warning finger, and went by without speaking a word; but with that ominous look upon her dark face.

Two weeks later and it was time for the coming of the Floating Feather, and every day for hours, Nellie stood upon the beach and looked out across the broad expanse of water for the coming of her husband; and Sarah Belton, up in the lighthouse tower, looked down upon her and delighted in her grief.

"Aye, watch and wait, watch and wait, you little simpleton. He will come; but only as I say, the water dripping from his drowned locks."

And Nellie heard the voice, and went away, for she could not see the white sails of her husband's schooner coming up from the west. The sun set in a threatening bank of clouds, and old salts shook their heads, and muttered a fear that some craft would lay her bones upon that shore before many hours had passed. The evening was sultry and oppressive, and about nine o'clock the wind began to come in fitful gusts, increasing in violence as the night wore on. At twelve a fearful gale was blowing, such an one as the oldest sailor in the port could not boast of seeing, and Nellie Varden was pacing up and down the floor of her house, wringing her hands and moaning in agony, when the door was thrown open, and Sarah Belton ran in, her black hair floating back in the wind.

"Come," she cried, wildly. "The tempest I have invoked is here, and the hour of his doom is nigh."

"Silence, miserable woman!" cried Nellie, throwing out her hand in a sublime gesture. "A wife's prayers are stronger than yours, and my husband will be saved."

"Come and see," screamed the mad woman—for mad she must have been—"'the sea and the waves roaring!' Ha, ha, ha! 'and the deep gives up its dead.'"

They ran out together into that wild night, and down among the crowds of frightened people on the beach. It was a hard port to make in a storm, especially when coming from the west. Upon both sides, five hundred yards from shore, a sunken reef extended, over which the breakers dashed in wild confusion. As they gazed, the distant flash at sea announced the coming of some craft dashing down to her fate.

"She is coming—she is coming," cried Sarah Belton. "It is the Floating Feather coming to her doom."

"Throw the witch into the lake," growled a rough 'longshoreman. "What does she want here? Light up the fires, boys. If it is Walter, he knows where we light them in a storm."

Three times they tried to light the great heap of combustible matter, and as many times the wind scattered the fire. Then it ignited, and the flame went roaring up to the summit of the tall pile too late to aid the doomed schooner, for soon as the flame ascended, they heard the loud crash, and knew that she was on the reef; and in ten minutes the Floating Feather was a wreck, torn to pieces by the power of the surf, and her people at the mercy of the waves. Walter Varden, as they saw by the light of the great fire, was standing at the wheel, and as the schooner broke up he disappeared in the wild yeast churned up by the breakers.

"I told you," hissed the vengeful woman in the ear of the fainting wife. "He is gone."

A dark form drifted in on the crest of a giant wave, and a brave sailor, with a rope about his waist, dashed into the surf. A moment of desperate struggle, and the gallant man, with the floating form in his grasp, was dragged ashore; and what a shout went up when they saw the face of Walter Varden, safe but powerless from the struggle which had robbed his sinews of their strength. A moment more and Nellie was by his side, sobbing out her joy.

In one of the grated rooms of the State Asylum for lunatics Sarah Belton sits, waiting ever for the coming of the Floating Feather across the lake, which is always before her eyes.

WHERE IS THY REST?

BY GEO. KLINGLE.

Is there no rest for the heart?
The wild bird ruffling his fleckered breast,
Chants on the winds and finds his rest;
Chants on the winds and the wild-woods start
Answering notes for his waiting heart.
Is there no rest, oh, winds?

The wild flower shivering beneath the storm,
Shook by the brook, or in silence born,
Fragrance sends forth, and the wild-wood flings
Back fragrance and rest on thy quivering wings.
Is there no rest for the heart?

The moth of gold on the scented air
Seeks for its rest and finds it where—
In the glance of the sunbeams the gold wings part—
The quiver of wings brings rest to his heart.
But is there no rest for man?

The wild glancing bird, the humblest flower,
The golden moth of the sunlit hour,
Drink of life and joy with unsullied zest—
But, oh, heart of man, where is *thy* rest?

Beyond, above, where celestial air
Rocks with new anthems, and angels wear
The glory of God, Jehovah's crest—
There, heart of man, there is thy rest.

IN THE SULKS.

BY GLEN CAROL.

If, in the course of your mortal existence, you have been deprived of the opportunity of dwelling beneath the same roof with an individual who is subject to aggravated attacks of that chronic ailment, usually known as "the sulks," you little know what you have missed! One pill of bitterness, of the many prescribed for us all, has been spared you, and fallen to the portion, doubtless, of one who has swallowed so many bitter doses, that one more or less cannot matter much. Justice seems to be meted out in that particular way in this world—gall to the heavy-hearted, and sweets to those who never knew a woe!

But if, on the contrary, you have "been there," you have our everlasting sympathy, for *we* have "been *there*" too! We know that you can never exactly decide in your own mind what would be the most appropriate form of address to the person afflicted. You desire to speak a few soothing words—you feel it your duty to "pour oil on the troubled waters," and proceed to obey the dictates of your conscience—when lo! you find yourself mistaken! Instead of oil, you have contributed matches, and behold the blazes! You escape, hoping that time and quiet may tone down the inflammatory action—and so indeed they do, but the chronic stages of this disease are even more painful to witness; the countenance assumes a sort of an injured-saint expression, and the eyes have a way of looking clear past you, without ever seeming to note your unworthy presence—the peculiar draw of the mouth says, without words, "Never was a being so imposed upon—hope I'll be out of the way, soon!" If it were possible for human *ears* to droop, we dare say they, too, would assume a dejected appearance.

You venture a little remark at the breakfast-table, addressed to no one in particular, thrown out as a kind of bait, to see if the fish opposite will bite. Impressive silence. The whole family seem to be etherized, or—victimized. Sulks are not contagious, but are very depressing in their influence upon those who chance to be near the patient. One person thus troubled, invariably casts a gloom over the entire household. Perhaps you have tickets for a lecture, or the theatre, and politely express to the invalid the pleasure you would feel at being permitted to act as escort. Your unhallowed lineaments are scanned reproachfully for a moment, and your invitation declined with an "I-renounce-the-world" air. As the hall-door closes behind you with a gentle slam, you mutter, "In the sulks!" It is a disease with which we have no patience. If we had our way, there should be a private hospital for the benefit of those afflicted, and patients should not only be kept there until thoroughly cured, but should be made to sign certain papers, stating that upon the slightest recurrence of the disease they be marched straightway back again, there to remain until absolutely fitted for respectable society!

THE TRUE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE.

The following extract from a Scotch poet's letter to his mother, Mrs. Nicoll, embodies the true philosophy of life. In alluding to a few pounds loaned by a friend to begin business with, he says—

"This money hangs like a millstone about my neck; if I had it paid I would never borrow again from mortal man; but do not mistake me, mother, I am not one of those men who faint and falter in the great battle of life. God has given me too strong a heart for that. I look upon earth as a place where every man is set to struggle and to work, that he may be made humble and pure-hearted, and fit for that better land for which earth is a preparation—to which earth is the gate.

Cowardly is that man who bows before the storm of life—who runs not the needful race manfully, and with a cheerful heart. If men would but consider how little of real evil there is in all the ills of which they are so much afraid—poverty included—there would be more virtue and happiness, and less world and mammon worship on earth than is. I think, mother, that to me has been given talent; and if so, that talent was given to make it useful to man. To man it cannot be made a source of happiness unless it be cultivated, and cultivated it cannot be, unless I purify and enlighten the soul.

This is my philosophy; and its motto is—

"Despair, thy name is written on
The roll of common men."

Half the unhappiness of life springs from looking back, to griefs which are past, and forward with fear to the future. That is not my way. I am determined never to bend to the storm that is coming, and never to look back on it after it has passed. Fear not for me, dear mother, for I feel myself daily growing firmer, and more hopeful in spirit. The more I think and reflect, I feel that whether I be growing richer or not, I am growing a wiser man, which is far better. Pain, poverty and all the other wild beasts of life which so affright others, I am so bold as to think I could look in the face without shrinking, without losing respect for myself, faith in man's high destinies, and trust in God. There is a point which it costs much mental toil and struggling to gain; but which, when once gained, a man can look down from, as a traveller from a lofty mountain, on storms raging below, while he is walking in sunshine; that I have gained this point in life, I will not say, but I feel myself daily nearer it."

Answers to Correspondents.

PAY YOUR POSTAGE.—Authors and others often send us letters and manuscripts not fully paid. In these cases the Department here enforces payment of the deficiency—which we either have to pay, or to decline receiving the letters or manuscripts. Authors will also bear in mind that the Department now requires letter postage on all manuscripts—therefore it is often cheaper, as it is always safer, to send large packages by express.

We cannot undertake to answer questions relating to the acceptance or rejection of manuscripts in this column. And there is no occasion of writing to ask whether we will examine a manuscript. Send it on, and we will examine it; keeping a copy, to avoid all danger of loss—as we do not hold ourselves responsible for the safe return of manuscript.

H. A., (Philada.,) says: "I regret to be obliged to call your attention to the fact that *some* weeks ago I sent you a note with what I considered sufficient remuneration, requesting you to tell me the author of the poem, 'If We Knew.' As yet no answer has been received, and as an old subscriber of your paper, I feel very much hurt. Believe me, my dear sir, I should not have trespassed either upon your time or inclination had I been more fortunate in my inquiries; but finding my friends as ignorant as myself, I was obliged to resort to you. If the money I sent you is not sufficient to answer a question of *seven words*, a statement of that fact in next week's Post shall be attended to immediately. Again I ask your attention, hoping as honorable men you will not let it pass unnoticed." In reply to the above we would say—1st. That if our correspondent sent no any money in such a case, he or she is entitled to have it back again, for we make no charge in such cases. 2d. That, as we have a great many questions put to us, and only a limited space and time to answer them in, our correspondents must take their turn. 3d. That as we have to go to press nearly two weeks before our paper is issued, we cannot, for this reason alone, answer any one in a hurry. 4th. That we wrote the answer in question, stating our ignorance of the author of the poem referred to, some time ago, but it has had to take its turn at getting in the paper.

A. L., (Phila.,) asks: "What is the meaning of the term Indian Summer?" No one knows for certain. The probable explanation is, that it was of old supposed to be caused by the burning of the undergrowth in the woods, at this time of year, by the Indians. Whatever the cause, it seems a good name.

AZALEA, (TEXAS,) writes: "As I have always shrunk from unburdening myself to any of my personal friends, I now grasp at the only hope of finding consolation, and that way is in making you my counsellor, as I am in sore need of advice. Of course you will think I ought to apply to my mother, as the proper person for advising me. But she don't understand me, and only says, 'What a queer child you are.' My father died when I was quite young, leaving a large family and but very small means of support; and what I want to know is, how can I help to provide for the family? My education is rather limited. All that I have has been gleaned from the few books we have, and a very small amount of schooling. Do you think, if I could manage to study telegraphing, that it would be a good support? I don't like to come down to manual labor, as long as I can find anything else that I can possibly make a living at. I am engaged to a young man who is also poor, and he professes to love me dearly, but is not in circumstances to marry yet. He is temperate and energetic, has a common education, and is book-keeper in a dry-goods store. I love him better than any one I have seen yet, but he is not exactly what I would wish; but I don't know whether I could find any one that suited me better, that would fancy me, as I am quite a plain-looking girl, and rustic in every sense of the word, but have grand ideas of life, if I could put them in execution, and can hardly control myself to lead such a humdrum life. I have always had a great wish to travel, but no means of gratifying it, and it makes me so bitter to think that I am denied the means of improvement and education, while others are spending their wealth so lavishly, living in wealth and luxury, while I am compelled to drag out my life in this out-of-the-way place, having not even a congenial companion. I want you to advise me for the best, and don't think me foolish, for I am so very ignorant of the world and human nature in general, and I know no one else that would take the trouble to advise me. How is my writing for a girl of eighteen?" We do not think you foolish. We merely think you are young and ignorant of the world, as you confess yourself. You should not think your case peculiar. It is very common for young people to have these high ideas of life, particularly if they have formed their conception of the world at large from the pages of romances. You will have to outlive these grand ideas, and learn to contest yourself with your surroundings, ere you can hope to be happy. Nine out of ten of the population of our country are situated like yourself, lacking wealth, the means of travel and improvement, and needing to labor for a living. Yet no one would think of calling them, as a rule, unhappy. They have learned to content themselves with their means of enjoyment, and have been taught that life is essentially humdrum, after the effect of its few surprises wear off, and it settles down to monotony. To the wealthy there is a somewhat wider circle of entertainment, but life's surprises fall with them, too, and existence becomes monotonous and humdrum. If you had experience, you probably would cease envying the rich, and learn to enjoy the advantages you possess. We can call to mind at this moment four millionaires, of whose private life we have personal knowledge, with not one of whom we could advise you to change. We could readily pick out four persons without any means with whom life is more of a success. Two kinds of wealth you seem to have, health, and the love of an honest man. You may appreciate the first of these better when we tell you that one of the millionaires referred to is spending his whole life in trying to keep off the gout, and is not succeeding. As for the second, you should not have engaged yourself to a man unless sure that you loved him. It is very likely that you do not know your own mind about the matter, and that it is simply these grand ideas that stand in your way. Probably the young man has a deeper hold on your heart than you sometimes think. As for the question of occupation, we are not in a position to give you any useful advice. There are lady telegraphers employed here, but we do not know how it is in Texas, nor what are the industries there open to women. You should look around and see what profitable branch of employment is open, which you have the opportunity and the ability to learn. And when once you undertake it, go on in spite of all discouragement until you succeed. It is not improbable that steady and pleasant employment would relieve your mind of much of its present bitterness. Your writing is good, and could, with careful practice, be made a very good hand.

J. S., (Harrisburg Pa.,) asks: "1st. How should you entertain young ladies when you call on them? 2d. Is it proper to leave your card when you make a call if the lady is sick?" 1st. There are many ways in which young ladies can be entertained, but what proves highly delightful to one young lady might prove insufferable to another. Many prefer agreeable conversation to any other form of entertainment. It needs some acquaintance with the lady, or considerable native tact to learn what will be agreeable. It is a good plan to follow the subjects of conversation, or other form of entertainment, introduced by the lady herself, as these are most likely to interest her. 2d. Yes. Any attention is agreeable to sick people. There is no time in which a person is more likely to be pleased with the remembrance of friends.

J. J. C., (Algona, Iowa,) says: "I would like to ask a couple of questions through your paper. 1st. Do you believe the story of Adam and Eve? 2d. What do you think of my handwriting?" 1st. Your question hardly comes within the proper range of this column. The great majority of the Christian world hold the Biblical account to be literally true—others hold it to be an allegory or parable. We do not wish to bring religious or political discussions into our paper in any shape. 2d. Your writing is plain, and passably good.

T. S., (Philadelphia,) says: "One family have taken the Post for about thirty years, and on the strength of that I would ask how to keep chestnuts from becoming dry and hard? As there is nothing like a change, I would like to know what you think of my penmanship?" There is no way to keep them from drying that we have ever heard of. People usually prefer to have them dry, as they grow sweeter when dried. You write a fair hand, not at all graceful, but plain, which is one of the most important requisites in writing.

CONOTTON writes: "1st. Where and at what price can I obtain a specimen copy of the North American Review? 2d. Is there a magazine published in the United States or Great Britain devoted to the subject of Natural History? If there is, where and at what price could I obtain a specimen copy? 3d. Is there not a school of journalism in one of our eastern cities? If so, about what length of time is required to graduate, and what is the probable cost, and do you think an education there would be of much practical value to a young man contemplating journalism as a profession?" 1st. You can obtain a copy by addressing the Review, at Boston, Mass. 2d. The American Naturalist, published at Salem, Mass., might answer. By writing to the publishers you can obtain all the particulars. 3d. We do not know of any such school, and doubt that it would be of much practical value.

WASHINGTON, (St. Louis, Mo.,) writes: "Will you have the kindness to inform me what are the duties of a clerk in one of the Washington departments? I am soon going there, and expect to get a clerkship. Is it necessary to be an expert at figures? And also do I write a good enough hand?" There are many departments at Washington, and many clerks in each department, and nearly as many separate duties as there are clerks. You must see then that it is impossible for us to answer your question in the space at our command. You would probably need to be an expert at figures, at least, in several of the departments. You write a hand which could be easily made a good one. It wants more precision to be a good business hand, but that would probably come with plenty of practice.

[Several letters are held over to be answered in o.. next.]